

S. C.
286.1757
B22m
1830

MINUTES
OF THE
STATE CONVENTION,
OF THE
BAPTIST DENOMINATION
IN
SOUTH CAROLINA,

*At its tenth annual meeting, held in Robertville, December 11,
and continued to December 14, 1830.*

1. The Convention sermon was delivered according to appointment by brother J. B. Cook, from Ecc. ix. 10. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

2. After prayer by brother Peeples, the letters from Associations and Societies were read, and the names of their delegates enrolled, as follows:—

Charleston Association.—Present, J. B. Cook, J. Hartwell, J. B. Miller, P. P. Bowen, B. Manly:—Absent, S. Blanding, P. Ludlow, J. Holroyd, W. Dossey, T. Dargan, S. Timmons, J. Thomas.

Edgefield Association.—Present, W. B. Johnson, N. W. Hodges, J. Blocker, Z. Rudolph, T. Lake, J. T. Coleman, J. G. O. Wilkinson:—Absent, J. Landrum, M. Mims, J. Childs, J. Phillips, W. Watkins, J. W. Williams.

Savannah River Association.—Present, W. A. Lawton, D. Peeples, J. Graham, H. D. Duncan, J. O'Bannon, W. H. Brisbane, T. Walsh, S. Howard, A. J. Lawton, S. Fur-

man, E. Estes, W. I. Harley:--Absent, J. Broome, D. Bythewood, W. J. Greene.

Education and Missionary Society of Saluda,-----; Absent, J. Wilson, S. Gibson, W. Magee, J. Harper.

Fellowship Benevolent Society. -----.

Congaree Benevolent Society. -----.

Charleston Juvenile Female Education and Missionary Society.--Present, A. Marvin,---Absent, T. J. Gantt.

Saluda Benevolent Society.--Constituted this year, no Delegate sent.

3. Proceeded to the election of officers; the result was as follows:--W. B. Johnson, President; J. B. Cook, Vice President; B. Manly, Secretary; J. B. Miller, Treasurer.

4. Ministers present were generally invited to a seat in convention, and to give their aid in counsel.

5. A letter of correspondence was received from the Saluda Baptist Association by the hands of brother Johnson. Brethren B. M. Sanders and J. Shannon, from the Baptist Convention of Georgia, presented a copy of their last minutes, (the letter of that body not having been in possession of either of them) and were cordially received.

6. The President, according to established precedent, announced the following committees:--

On the Preaching--Walsh, A. J. Lawton, Blocker.

On Accounts--Rudolph, Coleman, O'Bannon.

On Religion--Manly, Hodges, W. A. Lawton, Johnson.

7. Appointed brother W. H. Brisbane, to write to the Baptist Convention of Georgia,* and himself, together with brethren Estes, Walsh, Johnson, Manly, Graham, W. A. Lawton and Peeples, as Messengers; also appointed brother Johnson to write to the Saluda Association, and himself and brother J. T. Coleman, Messengers.

8. By order, the Secretary read the minutes of the last meeting of this body.

9. Agreed that the next meeting of this body be held at the seat of the *Mount Moriah Church, Abbeville District*, about nine miles west of Cambridge, on the *Saturday before the second Lord's Day in December, 1831*.

Brother W. A. Lawton, to begin the service on Saturday, in case of failure, brother Manly:--Brother Walsh to preach the charity sermon on Sunday, in case of failure, brother S. Furman.

* The Baptist Convention of Georgia, will meet at Buckhead, 14 miles south of Waynesboro, Burke County, on the Thursday before the 2d Sabbath in April, 1831.

Brother Graham prayed, and the Convention adjourned to Monday Morning, 11 o'clock.

The Sabbath was spent in devotional exercises. Those who lodged in the Village, attended a prayer meeting at sunrise. In the course of the day, three sermons were preached by brethren appointed to the service. A public collection was taken after the second sermon for Missionary and Education purposes ; and the solemn scene was closed with the administration of the Lord's Supper. May the Lord of the harvest add his own rich and peculiar blessing.

Monday Morning.—Brother Duncan prayed.

10. The Convention received a report of the Board on the subject of the Institution. This report, after undergoing deliberate consideration, was adopted, as follows :—

“The Board of the Convention, who are entrusted with the management of the Furman Academy and Theological Institution, feel deeply impressed with the importance of having *two Professors* at the Institution, as soon as practicable. They think, indeed, that a crisis in its affairs has arrived, which requires that efforts of an energetic and liberal character be immediately made.

Of the competency of the churches united in the Convention for any effort that may be needed, the Board can have no doubt. To meet the annual expense of the salaries of two Professors, say \$2000,—the Convention may look to more than *five thousand white communicants*, in the three Associations. To say nothing of a still larger number of liberal adherents and friends, and of the friends of Religion and Learning not particularly connected with Baptist Churches, (whose aid, in the aggregate, will be considerable, and may be confidently relied on) *if each white person, who is a regular communicant within the limits of those Associations, would give only 6½ cents a week, (our industrious slaves cdn spare as much without inconvenience !)* it would yield considerably more than \$16,000 annually ! A sum abundantly sufficient both to meet all contingent expenses, and to establish, in five years, a permanent fund, the interest of which only would support two Professors forever.

Deeply penetrated with the immense importance of the object, as well as its entire practicability, the Board approach the Convention to lay before them a plan, which, if approved, they are anxious to see tested at this meeting, that the Board may now determine whether it is expedient and safe for them to proceed at once in the appointment of another Professor co-ordinate with bro. Jesse Hartwell.

Were our Institution an ordinary School, under the man-

agement of two Instructors, requiring for their yearly support \$1000 each, the School would be sustained with seventy Scholars, whose tuition money should average \$30 each. Situated as we are, the support of two Professors will be secured, if *as many scholarships of the same amount* be paid yearly, in benevolent contributions by the churches and friends of the Institution. Let an effort be made first, *for five years.*

The Board feel that it would be a reflection on their brethren, when proper efforts are made, to expect less than a scholarship of \$30 a year, for each church, on an average, united in the Convention. As there are about *one hundred and twenty* of these, if any number of contributors within the limits of each would secure the payment of only one such scholarship a year, we should not only have the means of paying the salaries of two Professors for five years, but should have an annual balance of \$1600, to be laid aside as the basis of a permanent Fund for the same object, the interest only of which shall be used. Meanwhile, the value of the Institution will be more appreciated and felt among the churches, who will be watered and refreshed, not only by the visits of the Students employed in stated itinerant labours among them, but by several successive streams which shall leave the Institution to enter more fully on their Master's great work ; and at the expiration of the stipulated period, another effort might be made, which, with God's blessing, would place this matter on a liberal and permanent foundation. Should any contributions, however, exclusively designed for a permanent Fund, lie within our reach, they would be thankfully accepted from any source whatever, and sacredly reserved at interest for this object alone.

As the Board are persuaded that the voluntary agency of some of the Ministers and Pastors of our churches, if it can be obtained, is the most desirable, in order to carry this plan into execution, they beg leave, with reference to the whole contemplated effort, to offer the following resolutions :—

1. That proper efforts be made at once to secure the agency of at least two Ministers in each of the Associations ; whose immediate object, should they undertake such agency, shall be, to raise as many scholarships as possible, on the plan above stated, among the churches and individuals included within their respective spheres. The *first payment* to be made at the time of subscribing, or by the first of February 1831 ; the other payments to be made annually in the Month of January. The agents meanwhile are au-

thorised to receive whatever contributions may offer toward a permanent Fund

2. That the Convention, through its President, endeavour at once to secure the service of the following brethren as Agents, viz.—

For the Charleston Association, B. Manly and J. Hartwell ; for the Edgefield, W. B. Johnson and N. W. Hodges ; for the Savannah River, W. H. Brisbane and E. Estes ; that they be severally consulted on the subject, the consent of their respective churches, if necessary, urgently solicited ; and that in case they should accept the appointment, they be left to arrange the division of their sphere, and the time of their work, (so that it be within the ensuing year,) according to their own convenience.

3. That an effort be made at this meeting to ascertain the number of Scholarships which brethren and friends present may be disposed to pledge ; and that should their amount be sufficient to warrant the measure, the Board be authorized to proceed, as soon as convenient, in the appointment of an additional Professor.

4 That the Committee for receiving Students, and superintending their expenses, be requested to make such arrangements as they may find practicable and expedient, for employing the Students in domestic missionary labours* within the several Associations, and in other suitable places.

5. That it is considered desirable and expedient, when it can be done, to unite manual labour with study in our Institution, as conducive to the health of the Students, and its more economical management ; and that it be committed to the Board to take such measures, with regard to the object of this resolution, as they may find themselves warranted and able to do."

After the adoption of the above resolutions, the Convention adjourned to the Meeting House, with a view to see what may be done in filling up the Scholarships. The Pre-

* The Board beg leave in this way to suggest, that the chief and almost only obstacle to the Missionary efforts of the Students, is *the want of Horses*. These, or some other conveyance, must needs be supplied by benevolent individuals, or Domestic Missionary Boards, if ever the plan succeeds. With proper encouragement, the Board might fix on a vacation suitable for such an engagement, might distribute the several Associations into convenient Circuits, and assign proper persons to them, and thus regulate a most interesting and important Mission in connection with the Institution. Should the friends of the Institution and of Domestic Missions, desire such an arrangement, they are invited to open a correspondence with the committee above named, the chairman of which is the Rev. J. Hartwell.

sident and Secretary, by request of the Convention, laid the subject before the congregation, and such was the welcome which the plan received, that *twenty-seven* scholarships were immediately subscribed by members of the Convention and of the congregation together.

11. The committee on accounts reported that they had examined the Treasurer's Accounts, and find them correctly stated, and properly vouched. This report was accepted.

12. Applications for aid in books, in behalf of certain brethren, belonging to several Associations in the State, were received, and referred to the Board, to take such order thereon, as may seem proper on an examination of the state of the funds.

Brother Lawton prayed, and the Convention adjourned to to-morrow, 10 o'clock.

Tuesday Morning, 10 o'clock.

Brother Wyer prayed.

13. The Committee on Religion reported that they had been unable to collect all the materials from which their report should be constructed. They therefore ask time to collect those materials after the adjournment of the body, and transmit them to the Secretary, who will embody them in a statement, to be published with the Minutes.

14. Brother Brisbane presented the Letter to the Baptist Convention of Georgia, and Brother Johnson that to the Saluda Association, which were severally read and accepted.

15. A list of moneys received at this meeting was presented by the Committee on Accounts, and ordered to be printed with these Minutes.

16. As the Circular Letter has not been forwarded, and as information has been received by the Convention that the writer had prepared it, it was *Resolved*, That Brethren Manly, J. B. Furman, Marvin and Riley, with the author, be a committee to revise it for publication with the Minutes; with authority to divide it into two parts, should they deem it expedient; and publish one this year, and reserve the other to be offered for publication the next year.

17. The Committee on selecting a site for the Institution, reported, that in their opinion it is expedient to continue the Institution at its present location. They also recommended that some pecuniary aid be afforded brother Hartwell, in the erection of small buildings, should they be needed, for the accommodation of the Theological Students. This report was accepted:—and it was committed to the Board to carry the matter into execution on the cheapest plan, and on such terms as to secure the Convention against

loss, in case of the death of brother Hartwell, or the removal of the Institution.

18. Brother Miller brought up his motion made last year, for altering the Constitution. The proposed alteration was unanimously accepted ; and the 8th article of the Constitution was accordingly appointed to read as it is inserted in the 18th article of the Minutes of Convention for 1829.

19. The Treasurer's Bond for the year ensuing, was read and approved.

20. *Resolved*, That the vouchers of the Treasurer, the certificates of Stock, and other titles to property held by the Convention, be delivered to the care of the Secretary, and that he procure a suitable box to keep them in.

21. *Resolved*, That the form of Bond required of Beneficiaries, be printed with the Minutes of the Convention.

22. *Resolved*, That the Treasurer be requested to keep separate accounts of the expenses of each Beneficiary, as far as practicable.

23. *Resolved*, That the Secretary procure two copies of the first address, and subsequent minutes of this body, and have them bound and deposited in the Library of the Furman Academy ; also, the proceedings of the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States, not published in the Luminary ; also, that the Associations and Societies connected with this body, who print their minutes, are hereby requested to furnish a copy of them annually, to be bound and deposited in the aforesaid Library.

24. The Board of Agents reported, by reading their whole minutes, and presenting "a brief view of the Furman Theological Institution." Their report was accepted, and those documents ordered to be printed with the Minutes of Convention. It was also resolved, that the suggestions with which the "brief view" concludes, be referred to the Board.

25. *Resolved*, That the Convention learn with pleasure and gratitude, that donations of valuable books have occasionally been made to the Library of the Institution. To the Rev. J. Shannon, Rev. C. O. Screven, Mrs. M. Boykin, Mrs. D. Yates, and to Thomas Screven, Esq. (who gave books inherited from his Grandfather, the Rev. Oliver Hart, the father of the Charleston Association,) the Convention feel under especial obligation. They respectfully suggest to the friends of the Institution, that donations of books will at all times be valuable and acceptable.

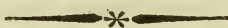
26. Elected the following brethren Agents ; J. Hartwell

W. A. Lawton, P. P. Bowen, N. W. Hodges, S. Blanding and T. Dargan, who, together with the Officers, form the Board of Agents for the ensuing year.

27. Committed to the Secretary the charge of printing and distributing 1600 copies of these minutes.

28. Voted the cordial thanks of the Convention to the hospitable inhabitants of this vicinity, for their kindness and liberality during the meeting.

The President affectionately addressed the members, and adjourned the meeting with prayer, and the Christian Benediction.



ACCOUNT

Of moneys received by the Treasurer of the Baptist Convention in South Carolina, since the commencement of their meeting.

From the Fellowship Benevolent Society of Edgefield, for the year 1829, for the Gillison Fund,	\$21 00
From the Education and Missionary Society of Saluda, For the Burman Mission,	5 50
For Missionary purposes,	13 00
For Education purposes,	13 00
From the Saluda Benevolent Society, For Burman Mission,	15 00
For General purposes,	15 00
From the Charleston Female Juvenile Missionary and Education Society, For a Scholarship,	70 00
From J. O'Bannon, for the Furman Academy, Of Thomas G. Lamar,	12 00
Of Edward Hays, \$2, M. Killingsworth, \$6,	8 00
Of J. J. Wood, for Mary Cook,	5 00
From N. W. Hodges, For the Theological School, from the Gilgal church, \$7, Mount Moriah, \$6,	13 00
Mountain Creek,	3 00
From Wm. B. Johnson, from Brushy Creek church, Greenville, for an agency,	5 00
From the Edgefield Association, (per Gen. Blocker,) For the Furman Academy,	43 25
For Foreign Missions,	24 62
From Sister Spring church, for agency,	3 45
From Little Stephen's Creek church, for agency,	5 00

From Mrs. Townsend, for Furman Academy,	\$ 2 00
Collection on Lord's Day, 12th December, 1830,	
Half to the Education Fund, and half to the Foreign	
Missions,	124 12
From Black Swamp Domestic Missionary Society,	9 00
From Savannah River Association,	
For General purposes,	30 60
For Education Fund,	51 20
For Foreign Missions,	7 25
From Z. Rudolph, subscription to Education Fund	
for 1829,	10 00
Red Bank church, for 1830,	5 00
Of do. for Burman Mission,	5 00
From M. Mims, agent for the rent of the Principal's	
House and Lot in the Village of Edgefield, for the	
year 1830,	100 00
From the same, sent up from the following churches,	
for an agency to the Convention, to wit,	
Lexington church,	5 00
Good Hope Do.	1 50
Siloam Do.	2 75
Bethany at the Republican,	5 00
In part of the Gillison Fund,	50 00
From J. Hartwell, for E. M'Nair, for Burman Mission,	
\$5, Education, \$5,	10 00
	<hr/>
	\$693 24

JOHN B. MILLER, *Treasurer.*

Robertville, Dec. 13th, 1830.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON RELIGION.

In the *Charleston Association* are 52 churches, (including two constituted the past year) 38 ordained Ministers, 20 licensed Preachers, and 6723 communicants. Number baptized last year 966. Contributions sent up for various objects \$1329 45. The next meeting will be held at Swift Creek Church, 8 miles below Camden on the Charleston road, on the Saturday before the *third Lord's day in November, 1831.*

In the *Edgefield Association* are 40 churches, (one constituted the past year) 20 ordained Ministers, 8 licensed Preachers, and 2829 communicants. Number baptised last year 361. Contributions for various objects appear on their minutes amounting to \$164 70 Church members' prayer meetings in private houses, domestic missionary labours, Sunday Schools, the Bible cause and Temperance Societies, seem to be encouraged here to a hopeful extent. Their next meeting is to be held at the Rocky Spring Church, Orangeburgh District, on the Saturday before the third Lord's day in October, 1831.

The *Savannah River Association* contains 32 churches, (four united with them this year) 18 ordained ministers, 8 licensed preachers and 4228 communicants. Number baptized last year 258. Contributions for various objects sent up to the meeting \$348 58. One church, hitherto unassociated, obtained admission into the body this year. Their next meeting will be held in the town of Beaufort, on the Saturday before the fourth Lord's day in Nov. 1831.

The *Saluda Association* contains 20 churches (one constituted the past year) 9 ordained ministers, 2 licensed preachers, and 987 communicants. Number baptized last year, 153. Contributions for printing minutes, \$27 68. This Association holds correspondence with the Convention, but has not become, as a body, one of its constituent members. A Society, however, formed of members of this body is auxiliary to the Convention—and has been regularly represented in it until this year, when from some cause unknown, all its delegates failed. The attention of the ministers and members of this body is receiving a salutary and hopeful direction to many important objects. Their next meeting is to be held at Brushy Creek Meeting House, Greenville District, on the Saturday before the 2d Lord's in August, 1831.

From the *Reedy River*, *Twelve Mile River*, *Bethel*, *Broad River*, and *Moriala* Associations, the minutes of 1830 have not been received in time to insert here an account of their state. From such means of information as are at hand, it is concluded that the aggregate numbers in them all are not less than the following—of churches, 100—of ministers, ordained and licensed, 70—of communicants, 5,500.

☞ The Secretary of the Convention, hereby asks the favour of the Clerks of each of those Associations, or of any friend within their limits into whose hands a copy of these minutes may come, to forward to him in Charleston a copy

of their minutes by mail, as early as possible after they may be printed. The like favour will be returned, with respect to the minutes of Convention, if the names, &c. of the persons can be ascertained.



A BRIEF VIEW

OF THE

FURMAN THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION.



Number of Students.

The first term commenced Monday, Jan. 18th, with eight students, Isaac Nicholes, Samuel Worthington, James Griffith, Robert Nappier, James M. Chiles, Henry D. Mahoney, Robert McNab, and Wm. G. Collins. Another, Wm. H. Brisbane, entered February, 15th. Another, John M. Barnes, arrived March 5th, and two more, James C. Furman and Wm. F. Missildine, were received March 16th, making the number twelve. These continued through the term, which ended June 15th. At that time, two, Robert McNab, and Wm. H. Brisbane, left the institution, the former on account of some pecuniary embarrassment, and the latter on account of ill health. It was painful parting with them, but the circumstances seemed imperative, and we were constrained to submit.

The second term commenced July 15th. One new student, Thos. Adams, was received. The number, during the last term, has been eleven. One, Wm. F. Missildine, left the institution Nov. 23d. The reason was, his father was about removing to Ohio, and wished him to accompany him. One powerful operating cause was, that Wm. F. Missildine was subject to the liver complaint, and parental solicitude could not be reconciled to leaving him. He expressed a deep sense of gratitude for the favour he had received. Of the remainder, two, Wm. G. Collins and James Griffith, leave the Institution at this time. Though their course of

studies has not been extensive, yet it is deemed advisable that they close their connection with the institution at the present time.

Studies.

With respect to the studies pursued, it is difficult to give an exact account, owing to the variety. In general, we may say, the whole number of students are divided into two classes, though they have not recited together. On the 29th of April, six of them who were most advanced, I. Nicholes, S. Worthington, W. H. Brisbane, J. M. Chiles, J. M. Barnes, and J. C. Furman, united in a class, and commenced the study of the Hebrew Language, the Greek Testament, and Horne's Introduction to the Critical Knowledge of the Scriptures. Previously their studies had been various, such as Geography, Logic, Greek, Geometry, &c. This class has committed the important parts of Stewart's Hebrew Grammar, and have read and reviewed forty pages in his Hebrew Chrestomathy. They have carefully reviewed the Greek Grammar, and read the Gospels of Mark and Luke. Also, they have passed over three volumes of Horne's Introduction, with the exception of certain parts in the 2d volume, being of minor importance. They have likewise written composition every two weeks.

The other class has studied English Grammar, Geography, Hedge's Logic, Conversations on Natural Philosophy, Goodrich's Ecclesiastical History, and the first twenty propositions in Euclid. They have also given attention to Reading and Orthography. One of them (R. Nappier,) has made some progress in Greek. Another (J. Griffith,) has studied the principal parts of Brown's Body of Divinity, a part of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, Jones' Church History, and Paxton's Illustrations. Two, (J. Griffith and W. G. Collins,) have read attentively, and have been closely examined on the Acts of the Apostles, Galatians, Ephesians and Hebrews. One (J. Griffith,) read in the same manner the Evangelists Matthew, Mark and Luke, and the Epistle to the Romans. This class also has presented compositions once in two weeks. Whenever it could be done, this class (R. Nappier, Robert M'Nab, J. Griffith, H. D. Mahony, W. G. Collins, W. F. Missildine and T. Adams,) recited together, yet their studies have been so various, it has been by no means a general thing.

The application of the Students to their studies generally, has been too severe. A want of exercise has been particularly felt, and though the importance of regular exercise has been often urged, yet it has been too much neglected. Consequently, prostration of strength, and some indispositions have been the result. It is hoped that the experience of the present year will be beneficial hereafter.

Preaching.

It is impossible for one to give an exact account of the number of days, in which the Students have been engaged in preaching. Several churches have been more or less supplied. The following list is nearly correct : the High Hills, two Lord's Days in the month. Mount Pisgah, two. Swift Creek, generally two. Fellowship, one or two. Moriah, one or two. Hopewell, two. Piedmont, one. Bethany, one. Camden, four. Woodville, four. Many other places have been visited more or less. Prayer Meetings in the neighbourhood, have been frequently held, and also a Prayer Meeting in the institution, weekly.

Periodicals.

Through the liberality of those who defray their own expenses, several of the most prominent religious periodical papers, of different denominations, are placed in a room fitted for the purpose, and denominated the READING ROOM. They are, the Columbian Star, the Christian Watchman, the Baptist Magazine, the Charleston Observer, the Catholic Miscellany, the Youth's Companion, the Baptist Tract Magazine, Monthly extracts of the Bible Society, and the Baptist and National Preachers. From these, the mighty movements in the religious world, are, in some measure, known, which, it is believed, will prepare the mind for more ready and active usefulness. One object is, to obtain the passing information, and present it in a condensed form at the monthly Prayer Meeting.

Deportment.

It affords great pleasure to testify that the deportment of the students is highly satisfactory. It is confidently believed that their great anxiety is to glorify God, and to be prepared for future usefulness in the cause of our divine Lord. A desire for each

other's welfare, has been a prevailing principle of action. Brotherly love has been a predominant characteristic, while zeal for the prosperity of Zion has appeared evident in their prayers and actions.*

Library.

The library consists of 620 volumes, but as these have been received mostly from individual gratuities, the collection is far from being very valuable. While we are grateful for the benefactions of friends we are very sensible of the want of many excellent and important works. There are, indeed, a considerable number of rare and valuable books, yet they cannot supply the defects just named. Such works as the following are much needed—Scott's Family Bible, Fuller's Works, Dwight's Works, Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric, Stewart's Philosophy of the Human Mind, Kames' Elements of Criticism, Butler's Analogy, Enfield's Philosophy, Rollin's History, and many others. A room is fitted with shelves, for the library, which serves the double purpose of library and recitation room.

Accommodations.

Rooms are now prepared for the accommodation of fifteen or twenty students. These buildings are frame buildings weather-boarded, and close pole houses. They are considered as temporary accommodations, erected entirely at the expense of the present Principal of the institution, and such were judged most proper, at least till something definite and final was concluded on, with respect to the permanent site of the institution. More rooms can be provided in a few weeks, if the number of students should require it. Boarding can be obtained, as at present, for any number that may come to the institution. Arrangements are made to this effect.

* One of the Students (J. M. Barnes,) has his mind strongly Inclined to the Barman Mission. His present determination is, to devote himself to that work, and would be pleased to part with all that is dear at "sweet home," in order to be spent in that service. He feels that nothing would rejoice him more than to be a sharer with the missionaries in all their toils and privations, their hopes, and enjoyments.

Classification.

Effort has been made to reduce all the students to three classes, one of which would leave the institution annually; but this has been hitherto impracticable. It is hoped that a gradual approximation to such a state of things will be effected, and that many years will not elapse before this object will be attained. Owing to the great inequality of mental improvement in those who are at present at the institution, it seems impracticable; and indeed, that all should pursue the same course of studies, appears to be inexpedient.

Expenses.

The expense of the Beneficiaries has been as follows.

Board of S. Worthington, one year,	\$100 00
Do. W. F. Missildine, $3\frac{1}{4}$ quarters,	81 25
Do. T. Adams, 2 quarters,	50 00
Order on Treasurer for clothing for S. Worthington,	40 00

Total \$271 25

The other Beneficiaries have received nothing for clothing, though something will be needed in the beginning of next year, for at least one of them.

In order to a regular prosecution of study, it was necessary to purchase some books. Agreeably to the order of the President, the sum of thirty dollars was drawn from the Treasurer, which was immediately forwarded to Thomas Simons, a Student in Newton, to purchase certain Hebrew books. But as the books ordered did not cost so much as was anticipated, a part only of the sum was expended. The bill is as follows,—

3 Hebrew Grammars, at \$2,	\$6 00
3 do. Chrestomathies, do.	6 00
3 do. Lexicons, do.	6 00
Postage and transportation expense,	1 00

Total \$19 00

By consequence, there is the sum of eleven dollars in the hands of the Principal.

To pursue the course already prescribed, a number of books will be immediately needed. Those needed will be 3 Hebrew Bibles, 3 Butler's Analogy, 3 Stewart's Philosophy, 3 Kames' Elements of Criticism, 3 M. Stewart's Commentary on Hebrews,

Ernesti on Interpretation. The probable expense of which will be about sixty dollars. Johnson's Dictionary quarto, would be a valuable acquisition.

There has been received by the Principal, tuition from those who defray their own expense, the following sums, viz.—

From W. H. Brisbane, half year,	16 00
“ J. M. Barnes, 1 year,	32 00
“ J. M. Chiles, in part half year,	16 00
	<hr/>
Total	64 00

Which sum will be paid over to the Treasurer, as money belonging to the Convention.

Examination and Vacation.

There are two examinations and vacations in a year. These, according to our present regulation, are appointed on the 15th of June, and 15th of December. The examination was held on the 15th of June, but on account of the meeting of the Convention, leave was obtained of the President to hold the last on the 5th of December. Of these examinations report will be made from another quarter. The next term is appointed to commence on Thursday, January 6th, 1831.

Suggestions.

1. The propriety of altering the times of the vacations, is respectfully suggested. The times proposed for the examinations, are the 4th Monday in April, and the 2d in November.* The reason for the alteration is, that such an arrangement would enable Students to visit their friends, or make short missionary excursions, which are in a great measure precluded, by the present season of the vacation. It would also be a favour to the Principal. In the fall, after a long hot summer, some relaxation is desired, as soon as the weather will admit of travelling. The terms would then be regular summer and winter terms.

2. The subject of obtaining another Instructor, will probably be brought forward. Though it may seem to some that one Instructor is sufficient for the small number of Students who are at the Institution, yet if the variety of the studies be considered, it

* These times were adopted by the Board.

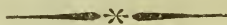
must be evident that the labour is too great for one individual to sustain. The branches pursued are, Orthography, Reading, English Grammar, Geography, Logic, Natural Philosophy, Ecclesiastical History, Geometry, Greek Grammar and Testament; the Hebrew language, Horne's Introduction, (embracing evidences of the genuineness, authenticity, uncorrupt preservation and inspiration of the Scriptures: the objections of Infidels of every age and character considered and removed; history of the canon, and rules for eliciting the true meaning of scripture; an account of the manners and customs of the orientals, which is absolutely necessary to a right understanding of various texts of scripture, with an analysis of all the books of scripture;) Biblical criticism, examination of composition, &c. Next year will be added the departments of Rhetorick, Moral Philosophy, Natural and Revealed Religion, Biblical literature, on an extended plan, Church government, Pastoral duties, &c. A proper attention to all these things is quite too much for one individual, unless he possess a much greater stock of knowledge than the present Principal. If there could be two persons associated, the labours could be so divided as that each branch of science could receive its due attention, and unless this is the case, it is greatly to be feared that the Institution must diminish and ultimately fall away.

On a review of the year, I have reason, great reason, to be thankful to a kind and merciful God, for his preserving goodness. Though my engagements in the Institution have confined me to the study and recitation room for 12, 14 and often more hours in the day, without any opportunity for exercise, yet my health has been preserved; so that, with the exception of a few days, I have been able to fulfil my engagements with the several classes. The health of my family also has been very good. There have been two cases of fever among the students, and some occasional sickness, which, in general, has been ascribable to some known cause foreign to the place. The illness of W. H. Brisbane originated from close study, and want of exercise. It is hoped that his case will prove a salutary lesson to all his successors, to beware of this example.

Ardently desiring the prosperity of the Furman Theological Institution,

This report is respectfully submitted.

J. HARTWELL, *Principal.*
Of Furman Theological Institution.



MINUTES

OF THE

BOARD OF AGENTS.

Charleston, December 15th, 1829.

The Board met. Present, the President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, and brethren Hodges, Hartwell Blanding, and A. J. Lawton.

1. Requested brother M. Mims to use his discretion in renting or selling the Convention's house and lot in Edgefield, as he may deem best.

2. Authorised the payment of an account of five dollars, for the removal of the library from Edgefield

3. Appointed br. S. Gibson Domestic Missionary and Agent, to preach and make collections, and that his compensation be thirty dollars per month, together with five per cent. on collections

4. Requested the Vice-President and br. Hartwell to attend to the execution of the bond of the Treasurer.

5. *Resolved*, That bro. M. Mims be authorized to act as the Agent of this Convention in collecting the debt due by the former Treasurer, and that the papers in relation to the same remain with him, and that, as he may collect, he pay over the same to the Treasurer of this Convention.

6. Appointed brethren Hartwell, Cook and Miller, a committee to examine candidates for admission into the seminary; and also the same brethren to superintend the expenses of the Beneficiaries, for the ensuing year, with authority to draw on the Treasurer for such sums as may be necessary for the purpose.

7. Authorized the Treasurer to pay the Principal's salary quarterly in advance; also for the board of the Beneficiaries.

8. Appointed the President, Vice-President, Secretary, the Principal and brother Hodges, a committee to arrange the course of studies of the theological students.

9. *Resolved*, That the salary of the Principal be 200 dollars, *from the Convention*,* for the ensuing year, and that it be payable quarterly in advance.

10. *Resolved*. That 25 dollars be placed in the hands of the President, for the purchase of books for brethren King, Robinson and M. Whorter.

11. *Resolved*, That ten Dollars be placed in the hands of brother W. A. Lawton for the purchase of books for brother Nathaniel Walker.

12. Agreed, that a sum sufficient for the purchase of necessary books for the students, be placed in the hands of the Principal, to be expended by him at his discretion.

The Board adjourned.

Robertville, December 10th, 1830.

The Board met. Present, the President. Vice-President, Secretary, and brethren W. A. Lawton, A. J. Lawton, N. W. Hodges and J. Hartwell.

1. The President stated, that the more particular object of his call of the present meeting, was to deliberate on the affairs of the seminary.

2. The views which had been agreed on in the General Committee of the Charleston Association, were presented to the Board by their Committee; also, the outline of a plan drawn up by the President.

After much conversation, the Board adjourned to meet again on to-morrow evening,

Saturday Evening, Dec. 11.

The Board met. Present, brethren Johnson, Cook, Miller, A. J. Lawton, Hodges, Hartwell and Manly.

1. The Board agreed to recommend to the notice of the Convention, that part of the plan suggested by the General Committee, which relates to the support of two Professors for five years, by raising Scholarships of 30 dollars each. Also, with respect to the voluntary agency of Pastors, and the Itinerant Missionary operations of the Students.

It being understood that it is desirable to raise as soon as possible, a permanent Fund, the interest of which only shall be used for the support of the Professors; that the agents be authorised to receive any sums of this description; and that should any surplus arise upon the Scholarship plan, beyond what is necessary for the annual support of the Instructors, it shall be laid aside as the basis of a permanent fund, and regularly put to interest.

2, Agreed also, to appoint a committee to arrange this plan, that it may be presented to the Convention early at this meeting, that if possible, its practicability may be tested here;

*The General Committee of the Charleston Association, paid 200 dollars more.

and if sufficient encouragement be given, to make arrangements for the immediate appointment of a Professor—the committee to consist of brethren Manly and Hartwell.

Adjourned until Monday morning, 9 o'clock.

Monday Morning. The Board met. Present, brethren Johnson, Cook, Miller, W. A. Lawton, A. J. Lawton, Hodges, Hartwell and Manly.

1. The Committee for arranging the views of the Board with regard to the institution, reported, which report was considered in detail, and adopted, and ordered to be presented to the Convention.

2. Brother Mims reported that he had rented the house and lot of the Convention, in Edgefield, for 100 dollars, and that he has not thought proper, under present circumstances, to sell it.

3. Brother Johnson reported that brother Gibson had performed the agency and missionary tour this year, which, from the indisposition of his family, he had been prevented from performing last year.

4. The President reported that the bond of the Treasurer had been duly executed.

5. Brother Mims reported in writing that such arrangements are made by the former Treasurer for the payment of principal and interest of the balance of the Gillison fund still in his hands within the course of the year ensuing, as are satisfactory to him.

6. Brother Hartwell stated that he had procured Hebrew Books for the students according to the resolution of the Board, amounting to 19 dollars.

The Board adjourned to meet again this evening.

Monday Evening. The Board met. Present brethren Johnson, Cook, Miller, W. A. Lawton, Hodges, Hartwell and Manly.

1. Brother Hartwell made report concerning the Beneficiaries of the Convention, and also concerning the other students and the institution in general. Agreed to present it to the notice of the Convention. The President and Vice-President also made satisfactory statements of the examinations of the students which they had attended.

2. The President informed the board that the Committee for prescribing the studies of the Theological students, had not thought it best to proceed very definitely in the object, as yet. The Board was satisfied with the reasons assigned.

3. Brother Johnson exhibited lists of Books presented by him in the behalf of the Convention, to brethren King, Robinson and M'Whorter.

It appeared also, that in the month of June, five members of the Board had met, and had appropriated 20 dollars, to purchase books for brethren Robert M'Nab and Wm. I. Green. The Board unanimously sanctioned the appropriation.

4. Brother Lawton presented a list of books purchased by him for brother Nathaniel Walker.

5. The Board resolved to make report to the Convention by reading their whole minutes; and adjourned *sine die*.

ACCOUNT OF THE TREASURER

Of the State Convention of the Baptist Denomination in So. Ca.

GILLISON FUND.

Dec. 15, 1829—By cash of former Treasurer	-	-	\$2162 31
May—1830—By Dividends on U. States' Bank Shares, (18)			63 00
			<u>\$2225 31</u>
Dec. 16, 1829—To cash paid for 18 Bank Shares, at } \$125 50	\$2259 00		
To paid for Power of Attorney, -	1 00		
To discount on \$1000, Georgia Bank } Bills at 1½ per cent, }	12 50		\$2272 50
		Over due,	<u>\$47 19</u>

DOMESTIC MISSIONS.

Dec.—1829—By amount of former Treasurer,	-	-	\$3 50
June—1830—To amount paid S. Gibson, missionary,	-	-	3 50

EDUCATION FUND.

Dec. 15, 1829—By cash of former Treasurer,	-	-	88 05
By half of the collection on Lord's day.	-	-	50 00
			<u>138 05</u>

Dec. 16,	To paid J. Hartwell, Principal of the } Academy, on acc't salary and board- ing Student,	\$75 00	
	To paid W. A. Lawton to be laid out in } books,	10 00	
	To paid W. B. Johnson, Do. . . .	25 00	
April—1830—	To paid J. Hartwell, on account salary, &c.	25 00	
May	To " do. do. . . .	75 00	
August	To " do. do. . . .	131 25	
June	To " B. Johnson, for books for Mr. Green,	10 00	
	To paid J. Hartwell for books for R. M'Nab,	10 00	
October	To paid J. Hartwell balance salary and } boarding to end of the year,	125 00	\$486 25
	Over		<u>348 20</u>

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

Dec. 15, 1829—By cash of former Treasurer,	-	-	176 70
By " of Dr. Blanding,	-	-	5 00
June—1830—By cash of W. B. Johnson, collected by S. Gibson, Missionary,			223 75
			<u>\$405 45</u>
January	To paid J. Hartwell to purchase books,	30 00	
June	To paid for tables for books, . . .	5 00	
	To commissions paid S. Gibson on money } collected, }	11 25	
	To paid freight of books, . . .	3 00	49 25
			<u>\$356 20</u>

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

Dec. 15, 1829—By cash of former Treasurer,	54 81
By do. Burman Mission,	3 50
By half collection on Lord's day,	50 00
	<hr/>
	\$108 31

Nov.—25 —By cash of Mrs. Macnair for Burman Mission,	10 00
By cash of do. for Mrs. Judson's fem. school,	10 00
	<hr/>
	\$128 31

GENERAL PURPOSES.

Dec. 15, 1829—By cash of former Treasurer,	118 00
To a counterfeit N.C. Bank Bill of Treasurer,	2 00
Feb.—1830—To freight paid W. Riley,	5 00
To paid W. Riley, for printing minutes,	80 00
	<hr/>
	\$31 00

TO AID YOUNG MEN FOR THE MINISTRY.

Dec. 15, 1829—By cash of former Treasurer,	95 51
June—1830—To cash paid J. Hartwell, to purchase clothing for Mr. Worthington,	40 00
	<hr/>
	55 51
Nov. 25———By cash of Mrs. Macnair,	20 00
	<hr/>
	75 51

WITHINGTON STATION.

Dec. 15, 1829—By cash of former Treasurer,	1 81
--	------

FUND FOR A SCHOLARSHIP.

Dec.—1829——By cash of former Treasurer, received of the Female Juvenile Society of Charleston,	125 60
--	--------

STATEMENT.

By amount of fund for Theological Seminary,	\$356 20
By do. Foreign Mission,	128 31
By " General Purposes,	31 00
By " to aid young men for ministry,	75 51
By " Withington Station,	1 81
By " for a Scholarship,	125 60
	<hr/>
	718 43

To due by Gillison Fund	47 19
To " Education Fund,	348 20
	<hr/>
	\$323 64

FUNDS OF CONVENTION.

Cash in Treasurer's Hands,	323 04
Eighteen United States Bank Shares, cost,	2272 50
Dividends due in July,	63 00
Debt due by Col. Blocker, to 17 November, 1829, interest from that time,	2481 42
	<hr/>
	5139 96

A house and lot in Edgefield Village.

JOHN B. MILLER, Treasurer.

Sumterville, Nov. 29, 1830.

ADDRESS TO THE CHURCHES.

THE STATE CONVENTION OF THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION
IN SOUTH CAROLINA, to their *Constituents*, and their *Brethren*
throughout the State, send Christian salutation :

BELoved BRETHREN,

The subject which has been assigned for discussion, at this time, is, “ *The proper Deity of the Holy Spirit, and his Agency in the Work of Salvation.*” And a more important one could not, certainly, have been selected. It is intimately connected with the glory of God, every branch of gospel truth, every part of Christian experience.

No sooner had our first parents fallen from their estate of innocence, than God was pleased to reveal to them his purpose of redeeming mercy; which purpose was to be effected principally by two means, the *Mediation of the Son*, and the *Dispensation of the Spirit*. Under these two general heads, therefore, may all the promises of God concerning the recovery of man from the ruins of the fall, be arranged. Before the Advent of Messiah, he was, indeed, the principal subject of prophetic song. As the great antetype of the Jewish law; to whom all its ceremonies pointed; in whom all its shadows were to be realized; by whom it was finally to be abolished; and the foundation of that new and nobler kingdom which the Holy Spirit has erected, was to be laid; his coming and work were wisely made the chief objects of faith and expectation with the people of God, under the Old Testament economy. The influences of the Spirit, however, were not withheld, or else there could have been no genuine believers in the world, previously to the accomplishment of Immanuel's mission; nor were there wanting very many plain and positive predictions respecting his person and operations, predictions equally encouraging to the hopes and obligatory on the faith of God's people then and now. Of this description, were, for example, all those promises which have reference to the experience by individuals of the benefits which the mediation of Jesus has procured, and the enlargement, the triumph and the glory which await the Zion of our God. But it is in the New Testament especially, that our faith in this subject is required. Here its reality and its importance are revealed, with a precision and an en-

ergy which ignorance only can doubt, the desperate spirit of skepticism alone dare deny. "It was the prominent topic of consolation and encouragement among those which our Saviour suggested for the support of his earthly friends under the impending affliction of his own departure from the world; which, as the most important feature of his commission, he deferred to communicate, till the communication would be most awful and impressive; till it would be remembered with the greatest accuracy, and its consolation would be most required." In like manner do his inspired Apostles insist upon it, as a fundamental part of Christian Doctrine. It quickens every page of their writings; without which neither their meaning nor their tendency could be ascertained. In avowing the Spirit's operations on the heart, (which necessarily implies the acknowledgment of his divinity) consists according to them, the *essence* of the Christian profession, and hence, by these, as described in the Sacred Volume, are men directed to examine their characters, their principles, their hopes, their prospects before God. We are taught, moreover, that "without the knowledge of these in their truth, and the improvement of them in their power," all other means and helps will be ineffectual to salvation: That it is with respect to these "the Church in its present state, is capable of an apostacy from God," and that "the *sin against the Holy Ghost*," is of all possible sins, the most awful and the most fatal. On this subject, therefore, do our present peace and our everlasting welfare alike absolutely depend. This removed, and *Christianity* would become a *delusion*; the *Christian* 'of all men the most miserable.'

Important, however, as the subject is justly conceived to be, yet it has (we know not why) occupied the attention of Theologians less, perhaps, than any other specific discussion. "Those mighty champions of Christian orthodoxy," says the late estimable Heber, "who in the demonstration of our Lord's Divinity, and of the atonement of sin by his blood, have left behind them labours which no sophistry can shake, no following talents rival, have been contented for the most part, to refer incidentally and slightly to the being and function of the third Person in the Trinity, as if He by whom we are sanctified to life eternal, were of less moment to Christians, than He, by whom we are created and redeemed; or as if the existence of the Holy Ghost were not exposed to the same or even ruder assailants than have denied the Godhead of the Son."*

* Bampton Lectures, pp. 11, 12.

From this cause, probably, has originated the supposition, or more properly, the slander of those who deny the Divinity and operations of the *Spirit*, that the doctrine has become nearly obsolete, among well informed and discreet Christians. Thus, a distinguished Anti-Trinitarian writer,* has not hesitated to affirm his belief, that "the distinct personal existence of the Holy Spirit is abandoned by every person who has paid much attention to the phraseology of the Scriptures." And again, he asserts, "The controversy (respecting it) is almost as much at rest as that concerning transubstantiation." Nor is this the language of an individual only. He is one of the principle oracles of the sect to which he belongs. His responses are their mottos. What he utters, they echo. Hence the superciliousness of their manners towards the advocates of the *antiquated* doctrine, and, above all, that wonderful self-complacency with which they descendant on the discoveries and improvements of modern, that is to say, *their own* intelligence and virtue.

Much, however, as the *Unitarian*† fraternity may endeavour to amuse themselves; and fondly as they may hope to impose upon the credulity of others by such disparaging and unwarrantable statements concerning this essential article of the Gospel Faith, one thing is, nevertheless, certain;—at no former period, have more desperate efforts been made by the enemies of all religion to extirpate it from the earth, than they together with these same Unitarians, and others of a kindred character, are now making to root out from the Church and the world, every appearance of a belief in the Deity and influences of the Holy Ghost. The truth is assailed on every side; from every infidel quarter; in every form of malevolent assault; with every weapon which a spirit of ridicule, of ingenuity, of violence, can command. The hostile array is indeed formidable; lengthened, yet solid; various, but not dissimilar. One motive, one daring is theirs. In a word, the Evil One seems to have effected an amalgamation of names, and characters, and sects, not less paradoxical than real, with the express design of overthrowing this grand pillar of the Christian system, and thereby preparing the way for the utter extinction of the light of life. How appalling the reflection! But, there is one fact, brethren, con-

* Belsham, Review of Wilberforce, &c. Letter vii.

† We use the term, because common use has made it distinctive; but we deny the justness of its application to those who have intriguingly usurped it. They mean, by it, to insinuate, that *Trinitarians* believe in three Gods, than which nothing can be more false. *Trinitarians* are exclusively true *Unitarians*. They, and they only, believe in the *one living God, the God of the Bible*.

connected with this melancholy scene, which presses with peculiar cogency upon our attention, as members of a distinct Christian denomination. It is this. From among ourselves has one gone forth to be the leader of an adverse band; a man, who, although far inferior in other respects to many of those with whom he is now confederated against the truth, yet has he no superior in zeal, no compeer, perhaps, in the spoils of his warfare. We mark his unenviable progress by the divisions and desolations of once flourishing churches, the inspired labours of his jealous associates, the growing estrangement of *neutrals* from the word and institutions of grace; and, as well from the rapidity as the disastrous consequences of his successes, (at the west) we have reason to fear lest he may obtain a wider and a still more calamitous influence in regions, where, hitherto his name has been known only as a beacon to warn the heedless and unwary against a spirit of presumptuous trifling with the Word of God, and his errors are yet regarded as the retributive delusions of an aspiring theorist.

The present discussion, therefore, is as seasonable, as the subject of it is important. It behooves every disciple of Jesus to arm himself against the common foe, and to do what he can to fortify others also against the inroads of error. The duty is binding especially upon those to whom, as its appointed guardians, the Ark of the Covenant is committed; whose province it is, as the commissioned heralds of salvation, to explain and defend the Book of God. They have devoted themselves to this service. The vows of the Lord are upon them. Let them be faithful and fearless. Wo is unto them if they either faint or refuse.

But while it is their duty to maintain the truth on all occasions, and against all its adversaries, it is not as mere controversialists, by dogmatical assertions or metaphysical subtleties, still less by personal severities that they are to seek its prosperity in the earth. The subject is one of deep solemnity; awful as it is real. It should always be approached with sacred reverence. Nothing in the motive, or the matter, or the manner of our attempts, should be contrary to Christian purity, humility, charity, such as might grieve that blessed Sanctifier, on whose peaceful influences depend the success of every endeavour to promote the glory of God or to improve the condition of man. That the truth needs no disguise; is never indebted to an unworthy artifice, has suffered more from the imprudence of its friends, than the hostility of its foes; and is better served by one solid argument than an hundred weak and dubious ones; that we are ac-

ting for eternity, and must ere long be judged for all the deeds done in the body; these are considerations which ought never to be absent from our minds, so long as we are either actually engaged, or are liable to become engaged in the support of this hallowed service. Nor should the reformation of those '*who oppose themselves,*' be overlooked: for, 'though carried away with the error of the Wicked One,' yet are they our fellow-creatures; their souls are as precious as our own; they have a right to our benevolent concern for them; and who can tell but that the Lord may have thoughts of mercy towards at least some of them? In the spirit of meekness, therefore; we should use every pious means in our power, "to recover them out of the snare of the devil;" "peradventure, God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." For, after all, this is the prerogative of the Most High. With the Scriptures in our hands, and their divine authority admitted, it would be, indeed, no difficult task to convince the teachable understanding of the truth of a doctrine so clearly revealed in them, as that of the divinity and influences of the Holy Spirit. But who can overcome the unreasonable prejudices of the carnal mind? Who can force the conviction of a truth which is purely of Revelation on a mind that is set against the authority of Revelation? Who can conquer the assent of him who *will* not be persuaded; or prevail against an opposition which bids defiance to Omnipotence itself? The answer is, none but God. None but that Divine Spirit of Grace, whose energy gave to the natural creation its beauteous form and whose peculiar office it is, in the exercise of the same "eternal power and god-head," to raise the sinful soul from moral death to newness of life in Christ Jesus; from the condition of a slave of satan to the rank of a child of God; from the expectancy of hell, to the heirship of heaven. To him, then, should we prayerfully submit the direction and the issue of every laudable essay to extend the honours of his name and the blessings of the gospel he has indited, among men. His gracious aid we do especially implore, in the present attempt. May He condescend to qualify us rightly to dispense, and our readers profitably to receive the instructions of heavenly wisdom and mercy.

It should be observed, however, that it is not so much our intention, in this address, to combat the figments of infidelity, or to seek the reformation of ungodly men, as to put believers on their guard against a system of error, the most delusive and dangerous that has ever disgraced the Christian name; to furnish them with the means of resistance to the

attacks of its propagators; and, by a plain exhibition of the grounds on which the glory of the gospel and their eternal salvation are founded; at once to deepen their humility, to enliven their gratitude, to quicken their devotions, to inspire their zeal, to impart freshness, and vigour, and constancy, to all their pious feelings, habits, exertions. And in prosecuting this object, novelty will not be attempted. Were it practicable, it would not be desirable. The subject on which we are writing, is, like that of the Saviour's Atonement, purely of Revelation; neither discoverable by the light of nature, nor capable of any additional confirmation or illustration from natural reason. And as we are wholly indebted to the *•*ered volume for all our knowledge respecting it, so, by the testimony of that blessed volume alone, must we be guided in all our disquisitions of it. Instead of endeavouring to strike out into an original and unbeaten track, therefore, we shall content ourselves with following in the safer, if humbler office of disciples. We shall use, with unreserved freedom, the labours of others, in the same field, so far as they have, in our opinion, adhered to the truth, and the advantage of our readers may render it desirable. As to our language, we hope to be perspicuous; to elegance we make no pretensions. *•*ll words and phrases which convey no distinct meaning will be avoided. We shall especially "guard against that jargon and canting language invented by idle and conceited men, with which to amuse and puzzle themselves and others; and which others, lest they should seem to be ignorant, would seem to understand."

Having said thus much, in regard to the importance of the subject proposed for discussion, the seasonableness of the discussion, and the general manner of conducting it, we now beg leave to state, that it will be impossible to contract all or even the major part of what we deem necessary to be offered on the subject, within the limits of a single epistle. A mere abstract statement of our *belief*, without any exposition of the reasons on which it is founded, would neither fulfil our design, nor realize the expectations of our brethren. We shall confine ourselves in this letter, therefore, to those *principles* upon which this, and indeed every other religious disquisition must be, if rightly, maintained, leaving the particular application of them to the theme in view, to our next year's circular. This course is recommended by many considerations. The following, we trust, will be deemed satisfactory 1. The doctrine to be discussed, like every other scripture truth, cannot be properly elucidated, except by the constant application of the *principles* referred

to; these, therefore, must be visible throughout the discussion, and for this reason, the statement of them ought to form a distinct part of that discussion. 2. It has been found wholly inexpedient to divide our remarks at any other point. The Deity and agency of the Holy Spirit are inseparably interwoven in the sacred Scriptures; they cannot be separated in the proof; neither can be established without the other; any attempt to do it, will be successful only in the judgments of those who previously *believed* it. 3. If men can be brought to investigate truth upon *right principles*, they will become convinced much more speedily and profitably than is practicable in any other manner. It is through the weakness of Christians, and the total ignorance of others in these respects, that error obtains so many converts; hell, so many victims. While, therefore, the prominent topics of discussion may seem to be deferred by the above arrangement, there is, in reality, no delay of the discussion, still less any change of the subject.

1. *The Being and Perfections of God, are the foundation of all religious worship.*

Religion has been defined, to be a system of Divine Faith and Worship. It consists primarily in the belief and acknowledgement of a Supreme Being, who is the object of sacred homage, and of the creature's duty to pay that homage to him. There can be no idea of religion, therefore, where there is no sense of a Supreme Being; for it would be infinitely absurd to talk of believing, and acknowledging nothing. Equally absurd would it be to suppose, that there can be any real sense of a Supreme Being, without a concurrent notion of his possessing some peculiar qualities or perfections, by which he is distinguished from all other beings, and on account of which he is entitled to the adoration of his creatures. Existence without properties is a palpable contradiction. Whoever then believes that there is a God, *must* also believe that he possesses certain distinct, appropriate and adorable perfections.

These truths being conceded, it becomes evident, that the systems of religious worship which men may adopt, will always be in accordance with their views respecting the Divine Nature. It is the first dictate of reason, that the worship offered, should correspond to the nature of the Being, to whom it is offered. Nothing could be more preposterous, than to attribute one character to the object of worship, and to address him as if he possessed another character. No man could suppose, that the Being whom he professed to adore, was really worshipped by this mode of

addressing him, any sooner than he could suppose, an honest man was complimented by being called a rogue. There surely is no worship in perverting the character of the Being who is professedly the object of our worship. We conclude therefore, that the primary reason of all religious worship, is what the Divine Being is, or is supposed to be in himself. But if we turn our attention to the Sacred Scriptures, we shall there find this principle most clearly and forcibly expressed. There we learn that the great end of our being is to worship God, and that the whole of that worship which it is the end of our existence to render to him, is based expressly upon his own most glorious nature. For this purpose he has revealed himself to us. And such an one is He, so grand, and yet so lovely, that the conclusion is irresistible, that because God is just what he is, therefore all men ought to love and to worship him, for what he is in himself alone. This is the reason of his own infinite complacency in himself. He loves himself infinitely because he is infinitely lovely. And for the same reason, antecedently to every other consideration, his creatures should love and worship him, with the utmost fervour and constancy, their natures will admit. To suppose the contrary, is to deny the infinite amiableness and excellency of God, it is "in effect to say, that the moral perfections of God are mere names without meaning, and that in the nature of things there is no more reason to love and obey him, than there is to hate and disobey him;" and "then," says the excellent Witsius, "God might command that men should not obey him—nay, he might have enjoined the hatred of himself, a proposition not only inconsiderate but also contradictory."

The truth is, God has no right to require our worship that is not grounded in his Nature; for the right to do this necessarily implies the possession of those perfections which of themselves entitle their possessor to religious honours, and destitute of which no being can be worthy of such honours. These perfections must, moreover, be inseparable from the nature of the being to whom they are ascribed. If then the Nature of God does not in itself entitle him to our worship, He has no right to command, because he is not worthy to receive our worship. Nor have we any right to worship him, if his nature does not lay us under the most solemn obligations to do so, independently of all other considerations. Our right in the promises is our duty also, and this is founded entirely upon *his* right to our worship, to whom that worship is rendered. But if God has no right to command us to worship him, it certainly cannot be our duty

to worship him, and if it be not our duty, neither is it our right to worship him. We never can be under an obligation, it never can be our privilege, to ascribe to any being whatever, that which does not properly belong to him, still less can it be required of us to honour him religiously, for what is foreign to his nature. This last is idolatry, and idolatry is always a crime. So far then, are we in the case supposed from having the right to worship God, that it would be highly criminal in us to do it. Thus we perceive, the supposition that the Nature of God is not the primary motive to the worship of him, both destroys the foundation of the law which commands it, and renders our obedience to it, a crime. That law is based upon the Divine Nature. It requires us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and soul, and strength and might, because he is just what he is. Take away the foundation therefore on which the law is built and immediately the duty which it commands is destroyed, and with the duty, must the propriety of obedience also cease. The same may be said, in regard to all the other commands of God. For, the reason of them all is, "*I am the Lord.*" If then, the Divine nature be not primarily and alone, an adequate motive to support the authority of that command of God which relates to his worship, it is not sufficient to enforce obedience to any other of his commands. They must all stand or fall together. But on this point, no room is left for mistake. The Word of God is most explicit. It declares that "whosoever cometh to Him, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Now the faith which is here required, is something more than a mere assent of the understanding to the fact that there is a God, something more than the bare acknowledgment of this fact, something more than such an acknowledgment, connected with an opinion that God is merciful, and willing to do his creatures good. This faith is an evangelical faith--that faith which "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," by which "the elders obtained a good report," Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice, and Enoch *walked* in holy fellowship with his Creator and Redeemer. It is a faith which has its seat in the heart, is according to truth, strong and saving. Under its *enlightening* and *purifying* influence, the believer most fully and cheerfully acquiesces, not only in the divine supremacy, but also in every thing which God has revealed in his word, concerning himself and his will. He delights to meditate on all his perfections, his Omniscience, Omnipotence, and Omnipresence, his All-suf-

ficiency, infinite Wisdom, Holiness, Justice, Faithfulness and Love. Nor does it abate either the fervor of his devotion, or the zeal of his obedience, that, in some instances, he must believe what he cannot comprehend; adore for what he never will be able to understand perfectly in the nature of his God. What God has declared himself to be, that he believes him to be; and in doing what God has commanded, he expects, through the appointed medium, to inherit his everlasting blessing. Such, in substance, is that faith, with which alone we can come acceptably to God. This is an universal principle. There is no exception to it; and justly so: for, if it might be disregarded in one instance, it might be in another, and so on, until we should be allowed to worship God, in the very act of denying him every thing that is peculiar to his nature—nay of attributing to him every foul and dreadful characteristic of the Pagan idols. We either *must* worship God for what he in truth is, or we *may* worship him agreeably to any vain imagination of our own wicked hearts. This principle, be it remembered, has reference to the mode of the Divine existence, no less than the perfections of the Divine Nature. For the former is as essential to God as are the latter. He would not, otherwise, be what he is; a change in either respect would make him altogether a different being. As then, we are bound to worship God for what he is in himself, so we cannot really worship him at all, unless we have an equal regard, both to the mode of his existence, and the perfections of his nature. If, for example, the Godhead exists in a plurality of persons, then our worship, to be acceptable to God, must have respect to the distinctions in his nature, no less than his peculiar perfections, and those who deny these distinctions, can, with no more propriety, be said to worship him, do what they may under the profession of worshipping him, than those who deny those perfections: for, between these, the union is perfect, essential and eternal. They are, taken together, the one, true God. The doctrine of the *Trinity*, therefore, being once established, men might just as well think of worshipping God by styling him unholy, unjust, or unmerciful, as by addressing him without a devout acknowledgment of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. But enough has been said on this point. We proceed to our second general principle, which is,

2. *That without a Revelation from God, mankind would be essentially ignorant of his NATURE, and, consequently, they could not know how they might acceptably WORSHIP and SERVE HIM.*

The *light of nature*, which has been so highly extolled by every vain pretender to knowledge, could be a sufficient guide in these most important subjects, only on the ground of its perfection. To this perfection, three things are absolutely necessary. 1. Its decisions must be universally the same. 2. They must accord with eternal truth. 3. They must be clothed with the requisite authority in all cases, to enforce a due observance of them. Now, if this be the fact, the evidence of it will be found in the history of man. His faith, worship and conduct will, everywhere, and at all times, be the same. They will also be correct: for, any variance, in either particular, will be fatal to one or another of those properties, which are essential to the perfection of the principle contended for, and consequently to its sufficiency as a guide in the premises. We have then only to appeal to recorded facts concerning our race, to decide the question. And what are these facts? The ignorance and superstition of the Pagan world are well known. They were, as a learned Historian* has justly observed, "foul idolaters, who misapplying the great truth, that God is in every thing, made every thing God." And in proportion to the number were the deformities of their deities. They were monsters of uncleanness, deceit, revenge. Their characters were conformable to the description which the Bible gives of the Wicked one. Saint Paul, indeed, expressly calls them "devils." 1 Cor. x. 20. On this point the Heathens were all agreed. There was also a general agreement among them with respect to the *rites* of their worship. These were suitable to the characters of the beings they worshipped, extremely obscene and brutal. In like manner, they were, with few exceptions, the slaves of violence and lust, "*being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, debate, deceit.*" So far, there was a general agreement. At the same time, however, there were not wanting such peculiar prejudices and practices in different tribes and nations, to say nothing about individuals in the same nations, as will clearly prove the want of *universality* in the principle (the light of nature) by which they were guided. A striking example is recorded by Herodotus. He relates, that Darius, King of Persia, having assembled the Greeks who were under his command, inquired of them, what could induce them to eat the dead bodies of their parents, as the Indians did? They answered that it was utterly impossible for them ever to abandon

* Fuller's Church History, page 1.

themselves to such inhumanity. The king, then, in the presence of the same Greeks, demanded of some Indians what consideration would prevail with them to burn the dead bodies of their parents, as the Greeks did? They expressed the utmost horror at the idea, and entreated the king to impose upon them any hardship rather than that. Now, this difference was of a religious character. It grew out of their different views of religious obligation and rewards, which necessarily implies a difference in their views respecting the divine nature and will; and, hence, it follows, that the light of nature does not possess that *universality* which is necessary to its perfection. Very many other examples of a similar import, might be adduced; but this one, it is thought, will be adequate to the purpose for which it has been quoted. It proves abundantly that the decisions of the light of nature are not, universally the same; and, therefore, it is insufficient, as a guide, to the knowledge both of the nature and the worship of God. And what shall we say in relation to the Pagan Gods; the rites of their worship; the lives and characters of their worshippers? Were these agreeable to truth? were they just? were they lovely? were they such as we can approve? Certainly not. For this reason, then, the light of nature is manifestly insufficient. But, supposing the light of nature sufficient to guide men into the knowledge of the truth, where, we then ask, where is its authority to enforce the observance of the truth? If it had the authority to do this, it would, doubtless, have done it, at least in some instances. None, however, is known. The *Pagan world*, learned and unlearned, rude and civilized, alike went in direct opposition to the truth; and the more completely they were left dependant upon the light of nature for their direction, the more dark and dreadful was their condition. We conclude, therefore, that the light of nature is not a sufficient guide, in matters of religious faith and worship.

But here, perhaps, we shall be pointed to those *philosophers* who have flourished at different periods, and in different nations, and be told that *these*, and not the *rabble*, are the true standards by which to test the sufficiency of the light of nature. Without admitting the principle implied in the reference, we are not unwilling that the question should be tried exclusively upon this ground. We will readily admit, moreover, that some of those philosophers did perceive the folly, and occasionally condemn the wickedness of the popular idolatry; that they advanced several sublime sentiments concerning the divine nature and practical religion; and that they afforded some beautiful illustrations of certain virtues in their conduct. It is obvious, nevertheless, that their

philosophy was essentially defective; it utterly failed in every particular necessary to the right worship of God, and the true happiness of man. Thus, they never could ascertain the origin of evil. On this subject, their theories were as wild and ludicrous as they were numerous and contradictory. Respecting the *chief good*, they were equally visionary and discordant. They merely *guessed* at a future state. Their inquiries relative to the pardon of sin, though patient and painful, were ever wholly unsuccessful. Is it possible? And if possible, in what particular way? Of what sins? All, or only some? And how often? These were, with them, questions of endless speculation, and endless uncertainty. They could go no farther than the heathen King of Ninevah, when he exclaimed, “*Who can tell* if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?” Jonah, iii. 9. And no less unsatisfactory were their surmises about the proper mode of approaching the deity. Here, no oracle was heard; no light was seen, or if any, it was only enough to make their ‘darkness’ still more ‘visible.’ They lived and they died in the midst of the most fearful glooms.

Conceding to them, therefore, a praise far superior to their merits, we must, notwithstanding, consider the greatest philosophers of the most cultivated nations of the Pagan world, as children of *the night*. All their highest attainments were consistent with a ‘*reprobate mind*,’ they left their possessors in profoundest ignorance of every necessary qualification for the worship of God and their own salvation; the victims of errors and vices, equally hateful and ruinous. Look at them for a moment. Infanticide, debauchery, theft, deceit, profaneness, covetousness, adultery, incest, sodomy, suicide, were not only found in their lives, but they even made parts of their *moral systems*. This is true of Zoroaster, of Socrates, of Plato, of Zenophon, of Cato, of Cicero, of Solon and of Seneca, the wisest and the best among them. All of them were chargeable with the common practice of one or more of the vices mentioned; and what they practised they also taught. Nay, what is still worse, contrary to their own instructions, they were habituated to some of the grossest of evils, and would encourage their disciples to imitate their examples, alleging in justification, the popular prejudices and customs. Such were the famous Philosophers of the Pagan world; those Philosophers whose doctrines and lives, have, according to the advocates of the light of nature, afforded the *best* proofs of the extent to which it can conduct man in his search after the knowledge of God, and genuine happiness. They did indeed all that men in

their circumstances could do. They pushed the light of nature to its highest point of possible attainment, yet they failed. In their failure, therefore, we have conclusive evidence of the utter insufficiency of the light of nature to guide men into the true knowledge and worship of God. But it must not be overlooked, that it was not the *light of nature* alone, by which these men were enabled to advance as far as they did in their religious notions. They all enjoyed the advantages of *tradition*, which certainly were not inconsiderable: and some of these were favoured with a direct intercourse with intelligent persons living in regions on which Revelation had cast its bright and cheering beams, and from whom they doubtless derived many of those sentiments, on account of which they have, and through them, the light of nature has received such loud and lengthened praise. So then, it should seem, that instead of being in itself *sufficient*, the light of nature is absolutely *insufficient* to every necessary religious purpose, even when aided by the partial glimmerings of Divine Revelation. Darkened and oppressed by the thick clouds of guilt, the human mind can be effectually enlightened only by the direct and luminous rays of heaven. No matter what may be the genius or the learning of men; no matter what their social improvements or their political elevation; if left to the unassisted light of natural reason, they will be always groping among "the shadows of death," "without God and without hope in the world." Let them feel the importance of knowing the truth, and diligently seek after it. They may learn enough to leave them *inexcusable* for their sins; but they will never become "wise unto salvation." Doubt, perplexity and despair will be their more certain rewards, by how much the more sensible they are of their ignorance, and by how much the more laborious their efforts to remove it. Turn to the heathens. They generally acknowledged their need of divine instruction, and hence their readiness to receive whatever pretended revelations were at any time broached among them. But it was their philosophers, especially, who felt and confessed the want of a revelation from above, and of these, the wisest and best desired it most. How insufficient, therefore, the light of nature to discover the saving knowledge of God and his will!

A further confirmation of this sentiment is to be seen in our modern Deists. Rejecting the volume of inspiration, they have become the *repeated originals* of pagan philosophy; standing and stubborn proofs in the midst of heaven's meridian beams, of the utter insufficiency of natural reason, pur-

suings its own lawless course, to conduct men to the true knowledge of God, their own duty and welfare.

But why should there be any hesitation on this subject? Is it not as easy to believe that God alone can originally know his own nature, as it is to believe that there is a God? And if this be so, whence arises the difficulty of believing that God alone can originally know his own will, which must necessarily be in accordance with his nature? Admit these truths, then, and we inquire, how either God's nature or his will can become known to his creatures, unless by a revelation from him. That when once his nature is revealed to us, we are capable of judging of the truth of any proposition which may be presented to us, as his will, according to its correspondence or disagreement with what is revealed concerning his nature, none will deny. But to determine any thing in regard to either, without such a revelation, has, to us, very much the appearance of usurping the divine prerogative. It is reducing him to a level with ourselves. It is to assume the ability, to fathom the being, and to search the very depths of God; all his perfections, purposes and decrees.

Finally, God has granted a revelation of himself and his will. He does nothing unnecessarily. If we had not needed, he surely would not have given us such a revelation. The bare fact, therefore, that God has given it, is irresistible proof that we were in absolute need of it, and this ought to terminate all dispute on the subject. It ought, especially, to have this effect, since the description it gives of the divine nature, and the proper mode of worshipping and serving God, is so entirely different from the notions of the pagan world, both ancient and modern. Here their errors are exposed; the causes of them plainly pointed out; and their dangerous tendency fully manifested. Here we learn, what are the actual necessities of man, and how his wants may be supplied. Here we are made clearly to perceive, that if we had been left to ourselves, as the heathens were to themselves, we should have been as blind, and stupid, and debased as they were. It is because we have the Bible, which they had not, that our knowledge of God is greater than theirs; that we are better acquainted with the rules of holy worship and living, than they were; that the hopes we indulge respecting the world to come, are brighter than any which ever warmed their breasts. In a word, take away all the information which we have derived from the sacred Scriptures, and we would know no more of the divine nature than those did, who made their Gods out of their own fancies;

no more of the true worship of God, than those did, who attempted it in the gratification of their own lusts; so true is it, that *without a revelation from God, mankind would be essentially ignorant of his NATURE, and, consequently, they could not know how they might acceptably worship and serve him.*

Our third principle is,

3 *That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, are the Revelations of God concerning his Nature and Will, and they are, therefore, upon their own evidence and authority, the infallible and exclusive standard of faith and duty.*

The plenary inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures, rests upon an immovable basis; a basis at once too elevated and too solid, ever to be shaken by the depravity of man or the power of hell. *The prophecies* they record, many of which have been already fulfilled, while others are continually fulfilling; the *miracles* by which they were confirmed, and which, although wrought in open day, subject to the scrutiny of suspicious and persecuting enemies, yet were never denied by them; the candor and irreproachable character of their penmen; the antiquity of their history, and its concurrence with reason and acknowledged facts; the grandeur, purity, and spirituality of their doctrines; the simplicity and sublimity of their style; their adaptation to the actual condition and necessities of mankind; their perfect harmony, alike in doctrine, design, spirit and execution, notwithstanding the writers of them were of different occupations, education, and habits, lived at different times, through a period of more than fifteen hundred years, and wrote upon a great variety of subjects, not a few of which had never entered into the minds of uninspired men, nor could they be known at all except by immediate revelation from God; the impossibility that any other being than God, could be the author of revelations so entirely worthy of himself, and so precisely answerable to what might reasonably be expected from him, in the event of his making any revelation of himself and his will to man; the preservation of the Scriptures in defiance of the most relentless efforts of their enemies to destroy them; their efficacy upon the conscience, and the success they have had in the world, forcing their way in opposition to all the power, philosophy, prejudices, vices and superstitions of men, even subduing to the obedience of faith, thousands of their bitterest revilers; their coincidence with particular institutions, events, monuments and medals; the resurrection of Christ Jesus from the grave; and, not to say more, the blessed tendency of the Bible to glorify God, to improve the manners of society, to promote every amiable and bene-

volent enterprise, to sanctify men for present usefulness and to qualify them for eternal happiness; these form a foundation for our faith in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, against which genius only discovers its weakness, and malice its impotency, when attempting either to weaken or to destroy it. Like the arrows which the Parthians shot at the sun, all the ridicule, and falsehood, and violence employed by foolish men, to injure this precious truth, will sooner or later return upon themselves.

But, it may be asked, what is to be understood by the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures? That the matter only, or both the matter and the manner of them were immediately communicated by the Almighty? We answer, both. God directed the sacred penmen what to write, and how to write it. They expressed his mind in the language which he caused them to use. They were the passive instruments of his will, and hence, although each one expressed himself agreeably to his own natural style and manner of expression, yet were they, in the selection of their words, no less than in the selection of the facts, and the declaration of the doctrines they have recorded, under the special control of the Spirit of God. His irradiating influences were granted in respect to what was before known to them, as well as what was before unknown to them. This did, and this alone could give a divine certainty to their writings. Without it, they would have been liable to error; but this put them beyond the possibility of any mistake. To this same cause, also, must be attributed that similarity of style, which obtains throughout the sacred volume, and by which, notwithstanding the peculiarities of its several writers, the language of Scripture can invariably be distinguished from that of every other volume. And to what else, if not to this, shall we attribute the assertion of St. Paul, (Heb. x. 15.) that the Holy Spirit was the author of what the Scriptures declare, without any reference being had to the penmen thereof? Very judicious, therefore, are the words of Mr. Brine, in regard to the Prophets, "The medium by which we communicate knowledge to one another, in this state, is speech, wherein we may err. If, therefore, the Prophets had been left to themselves, in the choice of words, they might have erred; to suppose which, is to overthrow inspiration itself, as it is intended for the infallible instruction of the Church of God. The conceptions of the Prophets were suggested to their minds in an immediate and supernatural manner, by the Holy Ghost, and they expressed those conceptions under his infallible guidance and direction, so that

they were effectually preserved from error, in thought and in language too; and therefore, their doctrines are not only of God, but the words in which they expressed those doctrines are of God also. As saints, they were not *impeccable*, but as Prophets they were certainly *infallible*; for they both thought and spoke under the infallible direction of the Holy Ghost." The same is true of all the sacred writers. They all without exception, wrote "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." "While," to borrow the language of Mr. Bogue, "every one followed that way of expressing himself, which was natural to him, and which constituted his proper style, God so directed their pens that the words they made use of were properly fitted to convey the meaning of the Holy Spirit, in his Revelation of the will of God." Such are our views in relation to the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures, and we attach very great importance to them. We could as easily give up our Bibles as these. Destroy them, and what is the real worth of the Scriptures? They are reduced to the grade of human compositions; and as human compositions, they can possess only a human authority; a doctrine as abominable in itself, as it has proved ruinous to those who embrace it.

But here a question may be started, in regard to the *genuineness* of the Scriptures we possess. Have they been conveyed to us in purity and faithfulness? That they have, will appear, 1. From the ends which God designed in granting them. These were, with respect to *himself*, his *own glory*; that men might know, love, and fear him as they ought; and with respect to *mankind*, his end was, the present spiritual improvement, and the final salvation of all believers. Eph. iii. 9, 13. Now, God is an unchangeable being. "He is of one mind, and none can turn him." These ends, therefore, which he proposed to accomplish by giving the Scriptures, must be accomplished; and there is no reason for supposing that the Scriptures, as the means of accomplishing those ends, will be suffered to be mutilated or corrupted, any more than the ends designed to be effected by them, will be suffered to be retarded or defeated. From the precision and exactness with which they were given, it is manifest that God esteems them very highly; and from the influence he has given them, in fulfilling his purposes, we infer that they always will be as necessary to the fulfilment of those purposes, as they ever at any time have been. The means and the ends are inseparably connected together. If we believe, then, that God will surely accomplish his ends, we must also believe that he will safely guard the means by which they are to be ac-

complished. And hence we conclude, that the Scriptures have come down to us in their purity, perfect and entire. 2. It is not to be doubted, that in our Saviour's time, the Scriptures of the Old Testament were uncorrupted. He often quoted, but never corrected them. He often severely reproveth the Jews for their miserable glosses and misinterpretations of them, but he never once intimated that a single error had been introduced into the sacred text. On the contrary, he was wont to refer to it as it then was, with equal reverence and submission, as the genuine Words of God. There could not, therefore, have been any corruption of the Old Testament Scriptures, when the Redeemer was upon earth. 3. Nor is it credible, that since his return to his own heavens, there has been any corruption of them; for, if there had been, it must have been the work either of the Jews or of professed Christians, and, in either case, the detection of it would have followed immediately upon the act. But no discovery of the sort has ever been made. Besides this, the Jews are known to be extremely careful to preserve their scriptures free from alterations. Could they be suspected of unfaithfulness, it would be in regard to those passages which depict, in such glowing terms, the awful unbelief and the consequent calamities of their nation; passages which are continually urged against them by Christians; on which, the spirit of intolerance and wrath was, for many ages, accustomed to construct the defence of its cruelties towards them; and which the Jews themselves have never been able to explain away. But what is the fact? So far from seeking to erase or to pervert them, they have guarded them with the same precise caution as any other portions of the sacred volume. Nay; although there have been seasons when, if any evil design had been cherished, the gross ignorance of Christians was most propitious to the hope of success in attempting it, yet in no instance has the least appearance of such a design been visible. Indeed, these were periods of more than common vigilance among them; they were the periods when every letter received its number and its mark, so that no future alteration is possible. Thus are the Jews acquitted of every charge of corrupting their Scriptures. The defence of Christians is equally strong and conclusive. The number of copies, (particularly of the New Testament) of readers, hearers, and even sects among them, have been far too great to admit of a successful attempt to corrupt the word of God. To this, it is necessary that the alterations be suddenly made in all the different copies existing at the time, and into all the different memories of

hearers and readers at once. There must also be an instantaneous and universal pacification of all the contending parties in the Christian community. "Besides, so many quotations of Scripture, the same with respect to sense as in our books, still remain in the writings of Christian Fathers before A. D. 600, as could almost restore the whole contents of the Bible, though every copy of it were lost," that it would be requisite to consign these, without exception, and without all power of resistance from those who might possess them, to a perpetual oblivion. But these are impossibilities; and, consequently, it is not to be supposed that Christians have corrupted the sacred page. 4. The effects which the Scriptures produce, are the same now as in the days when they are known to have been pure and unadulterated; and there is, still, that same internal sensation in the spirits of those who have their senses exercised, to discern spiritual things, on reading these holy writings, there ever was. The Spirit who first wrote them, witnesses to the spirits of believers, that they are the word of God. And such is the strength of the impression thereby made upon their minds, that scoffing men, however learned, can no more destroy their faith in this all-important truth, than the adversaries of the sacred writers could have made them call in question the divine influence by which they wrote. Believers, we mean true believers, such as the Bible acknowledges to be genuine believers, *know* that the Bible is the word of God. The evidence lives within them. It is a real, though invisible, a reasonable, although to the unbelieving, an incredible evidence. It is an evidence peculiar to their character as the children of God; and it is one from which they derive many, very many of their sweetest delights. The truth, which it confirms to them beyond the reach of doubt, may be, we think, has been established by other proofs; but, supported by this, it has a glory and a power in their hearts alike blessing and blessed.

Having shewn that the scriptures are, in truth, the word of God, the next thing is to prove, that as such, they are, upon their own evidence and authority, the infallible and exclusive rule of faith and duty. We begin with *the claims of the Scriptures to be such a rule.*

1. *They claim God for their Author.* This is done in a manner which fully implies not only the fact that they came from him, but also that he gave them to be observed by men. His name attaches to them the force of a law, so that when we read, the *Lord* said thus, or so, the implication is that because the *Lord* has said it, therefore it is our duty to believe

and act according to what is declared. Isa. xxxiv. 16. Now the sacred writers always speak in the name of the *Lord*. On their own authority. not one doctrine is advanced; not one command pronounced. The truth, as well as the authority of what they say, is founded entirely upon the fact, that they are merely the organs of divine communication. Thus, the Old Testament writers usually *preface* their communications with a *thus saith the Lord*. See 2 Sam xxiii. 2, 3. Isa. viii 1. xliii 1. Exod xxxiv 27. Jer. xxx. 2. Hab. ii. 2. And that the Old Testament writers, were, as they professed to be, inspired by the Lord to declare his words, the writers of the New Testament bear ample testimony. "*All Scripture*," says St. Paul, "*is given by inspiration of God*." 2 Tim. iii. 16. And says, St. Peter, "*No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*" 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. See also Rom. i. 2. Heb. i. 1, 2. It was, moreover, the usual practice of Christ and his Apostles, to appeal, and to recommend others to refer to the Old Testament, for the will of God. In this way, it was, that Christ repelled the assaults of Satan on the Mount of Temptation. Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10. Thus, also, he reprov'd the skepticism of the Sadducees. Matt. xxii. 29, 31. It was in this way, that the Apostles and elders, at Jerusalem, decided the question relative to the circumcision of the Gentiles. Acts, xv. 15. And in this way it was, that the Bereans, examined the doctrines of the Apostles, for which they were so highly commended by them. Acts, xvii. 11. Consult, also, Acts, xxvi. 22. John, v. 37, 45—47. x. 34. Luke, xxiv. 44. Matt. xv 3.

In like manner, the writers of the New Testament assert their own inspiration. 1 Cor. xiv. 37. 2 Pet. iii. 16, and i. 20, 21.*

2. The sacred penmen hold up their writings, as the infallible test of divine truth, the touchstone by which every spirit and sentiment must be tried, and every controversy in religious matters, decided. "*To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*." Isa. viii 20. "*Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which*

* It has been objected, that in one instance at least (1 Cor. vii. 25,) St. Paul disowned his writing under the inspiration of God. But even if this should be admitted, the most that could be made of it would be, as Dr. Fuller remarks, to "consider it is a particular exception from a general rule, of which notice was expressly given; an exception, therefore, which tends to strengthen rather than weaken the argument for apostolic inspiration."—*Letters to Priestley*.

we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Gal. i. 8, 9. Dan. x. 21. Rom. iv. 3. 1 Tim. v. 18. Heb. ii. 1—4. 1 Jno. iv. 1. 2 Jno. 10, 11. vs. Rev. xix. 9. Acts xvii. 11. Luke xxiv. 27. Acts, xvii. 2. xviii. 28. Rom. xv. 4.

3. The Holy Scriptures professedly contain every thing necessary to be known, believed, and done, in order to eternal life. Thus, they are said to be "*perfect*, converting the soul; *pure*, making wise the simple; *right*, rejoicing the heart; *clean*, enduring forever; *true* and *righteous* altogether; more to be desired than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey dropping from the comb." And still more explicitly do they assert their own entire sufficiency, as a rule of faith and practice. Jno. xx. 31. xv. 15. 1 Jno. v. 13. Rom. xv. 4. Gal. vi. 16. Eph. ii. 20. 1 Thes. ii. 13. 2 Tim. iii. 16—19.

4. They command us to *search, read, hear, meditate on, take heed to, keep, hold fast, continue in, obey, and contend for them.* John, v. 39. Deut. xxxi. 11. 1 Thes. v. 27. Jas. i. 18. 1 Tim. iv. 15. Joshua, i. 8. Heb. ii. 1. 2 Tim. i. 14. Tit. i. 9. 2 Thes. ii. 15. Eph. iv. 4. 1 Jno. ii. 24. Jas. i. 22. Prov. xiii. 13. Jude, 3.

5. They caution us against neglecting them. Heb. ii. 1. iv. 1. 1 Tim. iv. 16. John, iii. 19.

6. They commend and bless those who *hear, read, keep, and observe* them. Luke, ii. 28. Isa. lxvi. 2, 5. Prov. viii. 34. Matt. vii. 24. Rev. iii. 10. xii. 10, 11. Acts, xvii. 11. 2 Pet. iii. 17. Joshua, i. 8.

7. They reprove the following of the traditions and doctrines of men. Matt. xv. 3—6, 8, 9. xxiii. 8, 10. Mark, vii. 3—7, 8. Isa. xxix. 11—14. Tit. i. 14. Col. ii. 8, 20—23. 1 Cor. vii. 23. 2 Cor. i. 24. 2 John, 10, 11. 1 Cor. iv. 6. 1 John, iv. 1. 1 Tim. vi. 20.

8. They condemn, and threaten with the heaviest judgments, those who *refuse to hear, teach contrary to, disobey, despise, or, in any way corrupt and pervert them.* Deut. xviii. 18—20. Lev. x. 1—3. Prov. xiii. 13. Isa. v. 24, 25. xxx. 12, 13. Jer. vi. 10, 11. Hos. viii. 12, 13. Amos, viii. 11, 12. 2 Thes. iii. 14. 1 Pet. iv. 17. 2 Pet. ii. 1, 17. Gal. i. 8, 9. Rev. xxii. 18, 19. 1 Tim. vi. 3—5.

9. They are represented as the *foundation* on which the Church is built. Eph. ii. 20. Acts, ii. 42. 1 Cor. iii. 10. 2 Tim. vi. 19.

10. They make it characteristical of holy men to love, study and obey them. Psalms i. 2. cxix. Job, xxiii. 12. John, v. 8, 24, 31. viii. 47. xvii. 6, 14. Rom. vi. 17. Acts. ii. 41. 1 Thes. ii. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 2. 1 Jno. ii. 5.

11. They describe the wicked as not knowing, hating and opposing them. John, v. 38. 2 John, ix. 10. Acts, xviii. 6. 1 Tim. i. 18—20. 2 Tim. ii. 25.

12. They represent the condition of those who have not the knowledge of them, as utterly hopeless. Compare the following texts: Eph. ii. 12. 1 Cor. i. 21. Acts, iv. 2. 1 Cor. iii. 11. Mark, xvi. 15, 16. John, iii. 16. Rom. x. 14—17.

13. They possess an instrumental efficacy, which the law of God only can possess. 1 Thes. ii. 13. 1 Pet. i. 23. Isa. lix. 21. Gal. iii. 2. Rom. x. 17. John, vi. 63. James i. 18. Psm. xix. 7, 8. Eph. vi. 17.

14. They were designed by the Lord to be the supreme rule of faith and practice. 1 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Rom. xv. 4. Matt. xxiii. 20. 1 Cor. ii. 5. Rom. xvi. 26. 1 Cor. xv. 3—4. Psm. vii. 5—8. John xx. 31. 2 Pet. i. 12—21. iii. 12.

15. We shall be judged at the last day according to the Scriptures. John, xii. 48, 49, 50. Rev. xx. 12.

Such are *some* of the *claims* of Scripture to be the alone and infallible rule of duty and practice; and, upon these, we might confidently rest the proof of their so being; but it will not be amiss to add a few confirmatory suggestions, for the gratification of those who may wish to see them. We observe, then, that the fact of the divine Revelations having been committed to writing, with so great solemnity and exactness, is a powerful argument in support of the *authority* of those Scriptures in which they are contained.

All mankind are deeply concerned to know what those revelations were; the knowledge of them is indispensable to human virtue and happiness; and, as we have already shown, God designed them for the general good. He gave them to the world. Now, in order that all might know them, it was necessary they should be committed to writing. In this way only could they be faithfully communicated to all men; for those to whom they were divinely dispensed, could not personally teach them to all who lived in their own times, still less could they infallibly impart them to those who should come after them. The truths which they had received from heaven, must, at their decease, have been left to all the uncertainties and corruptions of oral tradition, and consequently, the very memory of them might, within a short period, have been lost. In the mere lapse of time, without the operation of any special influence, the native simplicity of their attire might have become totally defaced, while, in seasons of apostacy and irreligious excitement, which are apt to

occur at no very distant intervals, not one truth might have escaped the grasp of violence; not one might have been suffered to descend unchanged to the present day. Instead of that light which now shines upon our path, and those hopes which now animate our hearts, we might have been degraded to the dark and cheerless condition of the ancient pagans. Their idols might have been our idols; their fears, our fears; their destinies, our destinies. One expedient there indeed was, by which to prevent these melancholy results; a constant succession of inspired instructors; and these sufficiently numerous, in every age, to place the truth within the reach of all inquirers. But this was a bare possibility with God; and when we consider the amazing circumstances connected with the confirmation of *apostolical claims* to the regard of men, we cannot suppose that a resort to it would have been either so honorable to God, or so profitable to man, as the method he has adopted. Would the same "signs and wonders by the Holy Ghost," which established the commission of the Apostles, satisfy us, if repeated before our eyes, of the divine embassy of others, who should declare to us "the counsels of God?" If not, it would be pity to attempt to satisfy us; but if they would, then let us yield to the claims of the Scriptures, which were written under all these imposing circumstances; let us submit our understandings and our hearts, our bodies and our souls to the sway of the Bible. It is the Book of God. Isa. xxx. 16. Rom. iii. 2. He wrote it, that its truths might be preserved from all corruption, throughout all ages, and for the advantage of all nations. Had not those truths been worthy of universal belief and obedience, they doubtless would not have been thus recorded; and if they are not the exclusive and infallible rule of faith and practice, in vain shall we attempt to account for the special care, solemnity and precision with which God has recorded them.

We are led to observe, that God has afforded all *necessary evidence* of the Scriptures being his authoritative word.

The human mind is the creature of God. He, therefore, understands it perfectly. He knows what it was, in its original state of purity and light, and what it is, in its present received condition. He knows the precise nature and measure of that evidence which is either necessary to convince, or prudent to impart, in regard to it, to any subject on which it is concerned to be informed; and there is every reason to believe, that his wisdom would be no less displayed in the *evidences*, their substance, form, number, times and mediums, by which his revelations should be confirmed, than in the revelations themselves which he might be pleased to make to

mankind. He would indeed, accompany them with such irresistible proofs, as skepticism itself would not be able to doubt; yea, even Satanic malice would not dare to deny. Arguing from the analogy of Creation and Providence, we should infer, that God, in the event of his giving to man a Revelation of his will, would accompany it with such evidences, as would not fail to convince every humble, candid and diligent inquirer after truth, that it was a revelation from him, yet not such but that proud, conceited, captious men might fancy they discovered in it many grounds of cavilling; nay, reject it as an imposture; and this is the very course which God has pursued. To every humble and honest inquirer, the evidences are *clear, full and obvious*. John, vii 17. But to the vain and rebellious, "the light is as darkness;" they grope at noonday.

Now, if God has supported his word by evidences so satisfactory and complete, what less can we infer from it, than that its authority is final and conclusive? Can it be supposed that he would thus carefully provide for its reception into our hearts; thus solemnly impose it upon our obedience, if, after all, we might believe and obey, or disbelieve and reject it as we pleased? Impossible. The supposition is equally opposed to the wisdom, the goodness, and the dignity of God; alike impious and dangerous.

Another argument is found in the peculiar *manner* in which the doctrines and precepts of Scripture are revealed. These are not arranged in the form of a *scheme*; but, on the contrary, they "are introduced rather incidentally than systematically. They are scattered from one end to the other of the Bible, through all the historical, devotional, prophetic, and epistolary writings." There is not one merely speculative truth, not one abstract proposition, to be found in all the sacred pages. Every thing bears a practical form. In this manner has God provided for the *entire* perusal of his word, and for men's obtaining the knowledge of what is necessary for them to know, in such connections as are most calculated to impress it upon their minds, and to give it the best and the widest influence over their conduct. But why this arrangement, if there be no obligation on men to submit implicitly to the authority of the Scriptures? Has God given them the appearance, without the reality of a decisive power? written them so as to excite and warrant a belief that they are in *his stead*, yet left men to receive or reject them according to their caprices? Far away be the rebellious thought. Rather let us thankfully own and submit to them, as the *supreme, the infallible standard of truth and duty*.

Once more. It is absolutely essential to our deriving from the Scriptures any of those advantages which they were intended to afford, that we be fully persuaded of their infallibility and exclusiveness as a rule of faith and practice.

There is an intimate connexion between principles and practice. They have a mutual and reciprocal influence. It is especially true, in regard to religion, that those only who are established in the faith of its truths, are consistent in their conversation. We do not deny that for a time, indeed, men who have imbibed erroneous opinions may seem to have suffered nothing in their habits; they may maintain a blameless walk before their fellow-men; but their seriousness will gradually get looser and looser upon them, until, in some season of temptation and trial, they will manifest the viciousness of their principles by the corresponding iniquity of their actions. No one fact has been more abundantly confirmed by observation, and, therefore, none should be regarded with less incredulity, than that a spirit of speculation in matters of religion, is the certain prelude to "damnable heresies," the worst practical abominations. Hence have sprung almost all those bitter streams of corruption in doctrine, of irregularity in life, of variance and of strife, by which the church has been so often overwhelmed; so nearly, to human view, destroyed. The only safe path is that which the wisdom of God marked out in his holy oracles; the path trod by apostles and martyrs, and the real saints of every age; the path of humility, faith and grateful obedience. This path conducts to the right hand of glory. All other paths must lead astray. They are the highways of Satan. The farther they are pursued, and the farther and still farther will they be found to diverge from the centre and foundation of truth. They lead down to the chambers of death. Heb. iv. 2. 2 Thes. ii. 10, 11, 12.

Let it never be forgotten, that the Scriptures require, in all those who seek the advantage of its instructions, a spirit of docility and gentleness. They must be willing, like Mary, to sit at the feet of Jesus, thereby expressing not only their sense of their own ignorance and dependance, but, also, their further admiration of the person, their reverence for the wisdom, and their cheerful acquiescence in the authority of their teacher. They must be in love with divine truth, and manifest that love by an habitual readiness to believe and to obey it, just as God is pleased to communicate it. As guileless children, they must receive it on the veracity of him who communicates it; and, as affectionate children, they must do what he commands them, without either distrusting its propriety, or studying how they may evade its obligation. And, in this matter, it is not necessary that there should be any repetition of the instructions that are delivered to them. One declaration of God, one text of the sacred scriptures, if it be full and express to the purpose, is all-sufficient to prove the truth, and to establish the authority of any point; ten thousand more could not

really add the least degree of strength to the evidence, or of obligation to the principle. It was one command, once given, that our first parent transgressed, and thereby ruined our whole race; and it will be by one sentence, once pronounced, that our everlasting destinies shall be fixed. No reason can be assigned why we should believe God when he repeats a declaration, but that which makes it our duty to believe him, when he first pronounces it. If he is ever pleased to multiply the number, and to vary the forms of his word, it is condescension; mercy; it demands our gratitude; and it will aggravate the guilt of our disobedience, if we refuse to regard it. But it would indicate as great a want of sense as of piety, to say that the Almighty had thereby, or could, by any other means, add, essentially, to the authority of what he had declared. And, hence, we conclude, that any single passage, that is clear and full to the point, is all the proof that is necessary, both of the correctness and the imperativeness of the sentiment which is contained in it.

We advance a step beyond this, and maintain that an *express* "*thus saith the Lord*," is not indispensable to the Scriptural authority of a sentiment. Whatever truth is clearly *implied* in the Word of God, is no less *certainly* revealed to us for our faith and obedience, than if it had been expressed in so many words. It is not to be denied that God was acquainted with the best possible mode of communicating his will to men. "His understanding is infinite." Nor can it be disputed, that he had a right to determine in what manner he would make his revelations. It rested entirely with him, whether he would make any; and if any, what, and when, and how. Further; in whatever way he chose to make known his will, the revelation is as *real*, as though it had been made in any other way; and because its authority is grounded on the fact of its being the revelation of God, we are equally bound in every instance to submit our understandings and our lives to its controlling influence. If indeed, God were under any obligation to reveal his will to us in a particular manner, then it would be our duty not to receive any thing as a revelation from him which was not revealed in that precise manner. But no such obligation exists, none is possible. It therefore behooves us to receive his communications as he is pleased to make them. Once made, they are our supreme law, and it is only for us to have the opportunity of knowing them to be bound by them. Now, God has been pleased to make known to us some things in a direct way, and some in an indirect way. A striking example of the indirect revelation of an important doctrine, is found in the declaration of God to his servant Moses in Horeb. "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Here there is no explicit assurance of the resurrection of the dead—yet that this doctrine is taught therein, we have the most unquestionable evidence. It was, by a reference to this same passage that Christ confuted the objections of the Sadducees to it. They had advan-

ced what they supposed to be an irrefragable argument against it, viz. the law of Moses respecting a man's marrying the widow of a brother who had died without issue. "Now," said they, "there were with us seven brethren: and the first when he had married a wife, deceased; and having no issue, left his wife unto his brother. Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Matt. xxii. 25—32.

In this manner did Christ prove, both that, the doctrine of the resurrection was taught, really, though indirectly, in God's declaration to Moses, and that, for this reason, the Sadducees were bound to believe it, as much as if it had been revealed in more definite terms. He tells them that "this was spoken to them by God," and that they were guilty of *erring* against the Scriptures, by refusing their faith in it.

To the same class of revelations do the types, prophecies, parables, histories, and examples of the Scriptures, belong. They all abound with important sentiments, which we are under solemn obligations to *search* out, to believe and to obey—And that we cannot neglect this duty except at our infinite peril, is evident as well from the awful consequences of the Jews' unbelief in the great things which were shadowed forth by their ceremonial worship, as by the Saviour's reproof of the skepticism of the Sadducees, in relation to the resurrection. Further, it was a *common practice* with the Saviour and his apostles, to reason from scripture consequences, and their reasonings, from these, are admitted to be the revelations of God to us. Rom. iii. 9, 10, 11. Gal. iii. Heb. iv. 1—13. But how could this be, if the premises themselves, from which they reasoned, were not the revelations of God to us, and consequently binding upon our faith and obedience?

It might easily be shown that this method, is strictly adapted to our natures, and well calculated to prevent any material alterations of the word of God, and also to promote the belief of its doctrines among men. Let it suffice, merely to say, in the language of an excellent divine, "The most effectual advances are made, and our progress is then most pleasurable, when, with no more assistance from others than is absolutely necessary, we master every difficulty by our own resources, and associate in our recollection the beauty of truth with the triumph of successful inquiry." And again, in written documents, "a le-

gitimate influence from unsuspected premises, will often more avail in the establishment of an ancient opinion, than even the strongest positive testimony," for, "there is always a greater chance when such positive assertions are produced, that the text may have suffered by indiscreet or fraudulent zeal. But, when a proposition is presented incidentally to our notice; when it is elicited from recorded facts or assertions so circumstanced as to be a necessary part of the treatise or history in which it occurs, when it follows as a necessary corollary from arguments of which the immediate reference is to another subject, there is no longer room to apprehend the collusion of partizans or the wilful inaccuracy of transcribers; and the proof has the same advantage over the strongest positive assertions, as that which is ascribed by lawyers to circumstantial, over direct, but unsupported evidence." (Heber's Bampton Lectures, pp. 222, 226, 227.)

Thus have we shown the truth of our proposition, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Revelations of God, and that they are therefore the exclusive and infallible rule of faith and practice.

We proceed to our last proposition, which is, that

4. *The Scriptures are to be interpreted by the same principles by which all other books are interpreted.*

The Scriptures are a Revelation from God to men, written in their own language, and intending their general benefit. It is made the duty of all who enjoy it, to study, believe and obey it. From them no excuse for not believing or obeying it is admissible. But on the contrary, they are made responsible for whatever errors they may imbibe with respect to its doctrines, no less than for all the actual transgressions of which they may be guilty against its precepts. The word of the Saviour is peremptory—"He that believeth not"—that is, the very gospel which he commissioned his apostles to preach, and which is contained in the Scriptures, and as it is therein declared to them, "*shall be damned.*" Hence it is obvious that the Scriptures are to be interpreted according to the common meaning of the words in which they were written. Indeed they could in no otherwise be a revelation. On any other supposition, "an inspired interpreter would now be as necessary to explain, as an inspired prophet or apostle was necessary to compose the books of scripture."

For this reason, doubtless, the plainness and perspicuity of the scriptures are so repeatedly asserted in the Bible. Deut. xxx. 11—14. 2 Cor. iv. 2—4. Rom. xvi. 26. Isa. xxxv. 8. 2 Pet. i. 19. Prov. vi. 23. Ps. xix. 7, 8. cix. 105.

Unhappily for the cause of truth, however, there has been but too great a propensity among Christian professors to convert the scriptures into a sealed book. Since the days of Origen, who by introducing the *allegorical* mode of interpretation, "opened, as Mosheim observes, a secure retreat for all sorts of errors that a wild and irregular imagination could bring forth," there

have not been wanting many imitators of his example, and consequently not a few of his errors. This has now become one of the principal means by which enthusiasts and heretics endeavour to build up their extravagant and wicked theories. Some use it under an avowed contempt of all reason; while others do it under the pretence of refined and cultivated understanding. But, in whatever way it is done, the truth is made to suffer; they are, therefore, both alike to be condemned. Reason is good in its place, and to refuse its assistance within its proper sphere, is, in so far as truth is concerned, an actual betrayal of it. Reason is used 'lawfully,' when employed in investigating the evidences of revelation, of defending and illustrating the meaning of what it declares. This is acting within its proper bounds; and to discard it from this service, would be no less foolish than to refuse the benefit of any light which the providence of God might cast upon the word of God. It is the height of ingratitude to do it. Those who are guilty of so doing, are, in the act, guilty of stigmatizing as a curse, that which revelation makes a blessing. Without reason, we should be incapable of receiving a revelation from God. This revelation is a reasonable revelation. It is addressed to us as rational beings; and we must exercise our reason upon it, if ever we would understand, or derive any benefit from its instructions.

Yet are we not to make our *reason* the judge of what is fit and credible in the *doctrines* of Scripture. This is the prerogative of God. It is infinitely removed from the province of human reason. To presume here is as unreasonable as it is impious. Stronger proof that a doctrine is worthy of our belief, however incomprehensible to our minds, could not be given than its being found in the word of God. Whatever is there declared has his infinite wisdom for its recommendation, and his sovereign will for its authority. And thus to call its credibility in question is nothing else than to impeach the Divine wisdom of weakness, and the Divine sovereignty of an imposition. Nor less calumnious is the accusation which it implies against the *goodness* of God. It was mercy that moved him to reveal what he has done; and he has afforded abundant evidence that in all he has done, our welfare was designed. Shall we then requite his kindness in so base a manner—reject as incredible and unworthy of our regard his kindest, wisest doings in our behalf? If this be reason, blessed be those who have it not.

Many rules for the right interpretation of the Scriptures have been laid down by theologians. The most important and the best, as we conceive, are the following.

That they be made the subject of frequent, humble, attentive and prayerful perusal and meditation, accompanied with an earnest desire to know, and a sincere resolution to obey the truth as it is revealed.

That we carefully compare the Scriptures with one another, and never fix a meaning on any passage which is flatly opposed to known matters of fact, or that is contrary to the *analogy of faith*, or any thing that is elsewhere written in the sacred volume.

That we pay a nice regard to the peculiar idioms of the languages in which they were originally written—the occasion and scope of the book, and of the particular passage which we are examining—the state and circumstances of the persons addressed—the immediate context, and the precise meaning of the terms which are used.

That we invariably and strictly adhere to the literal sense of the words used, without the most evident and forcible reasons for departing therefrom, and without “*conjecturing peculiarities in the writer’s style.*”

That we attend to the geography, history, manners, customs and laws of the different nations to which any reference is had, but especially that we be familiar with the history of the church, and the tendencies as well as rise and circumstances of the various doctrines which have been propagated in the world.

And above all, that we constantly remember that we are under the immediate inspection of God, and that we must shortly be summoned before his burning throne, to be judged according to the true import of his faithful word, and where no error, however popular, or however *sincerely* embraced, will escape his righteous rebuke, or fail to draw down upon our souls a reward suitable to its own wickedness—proportionate to the zeal with which we have maintained it—answerable to the influence it has had upon our conduct.

Thus have we, imperfectly, indeed, gone through with the proposed exposition of the principles, agreeably to which the discussion of our subject, as well as that of every other religious doctrine, ought to be conducted; and which, if observed, will, we firmly believe, lead every inquirer to the cheerful and unreserved acknowledgment of all the important articles of the Christian faith. But let these be disregarded; let men adopt others of a different description, and they will, they must inevitably go astray. Genius and learning will be no safeguard; they will rather facilitate the departure of their possessors from the “truth as it is in Je-

sus," and eventually cover them with deeper shame. Awfully dangerous is the supposition, that it is of little moment what a man believes if his life is only correct. This has been the everlasting destruction of thousands. It is daily crowding the gates of death. A more fatal error was never employed by the adversary of God and man to defeat the purposes of heavenly love; to extend the influence and the horrors of sin and transgression.

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the spiritual gift, seeing that we have not followed after cunningly devised fables, let us, each in his station, abound in the labour of the Lord, diffusing as we may that saving knowledge, the possession of which alone could make it expedient for the disciples of Christ that their Master should depart and leave them! And let us pour forth, above all, our fervent prayers to the Almighty Spirit, who hath given us these holy records of his will, that by his supporting grace, they may bring forth in us the fruit of holiness, and the harvest of life without end, through the mercies of the Father, the merits of the Son, and the strong protection of the Comforter."—Heber, p. 583.

WM. B. JOHNSON, *President.*

B. MANLY, *Secretary.*

FORM OF THE BOND
REQUIRED
OF A BENEFICIARY.

*State of South Carolina, }
District. }*

Know all men, by these Presents, that I, A. B. of ——— District, and State aforesaid, am held and firmly bound unto the State Convention of the Baptist Denomination in So. Car. in the sum of ——— dollars, good and lawful money of the United State of America, to be paid to the said the State Convention of So. Car.: For the payment of which well and truly to be made and done, I do hereby bind myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, firmly by these presents.

Signed with my hand, and sealed with my seal, this ——— day of ——— in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ——— and in the ——— year of the Independence of the United States of America.

Whereas the said Convention, at an annual meeting thereof, in the town of Greenville, in December 1826, by the 33d article of their minutes made the following resolution, to wit: “*Resolved*, that the Board be instructed, in receiving Beneficiaries, to require them to enter into an obligation to be under the direction of the Board while in the pursuit of their studies, not to withdraw from the patronage of the Board without their leave, and if they do not enter on the work of the ministry within a reasonable time after finishing their education, or if, after entering into the ministry, they afterwards either apostatize or leave the work, to refund the money expended in their behalf with lawful interest.”

Now, the condition of this obligation is such, that if I, the said A. B. shall refuse to be under the direction of the Board

of the said the State Convention of the Baptist Denomination in So. Car. while in the pursuit of my studies, or shall withdraw myself from the patronage of the said Board without their leave, or if I shall not within a reasonable time after finishing my education, enter on the work of the ministry, or after entering on it shall apostatize or leave the work—then, and in that case, I am to refund to the said the State Convention of the Baptist Denomination in S. C. all the money with lawful interest that they may expend in my behalf: Then this obligation to be void, otherwise to be and remain in full force and virtue.

A. B. [L.S.]

SIGNED (BEING SEALED) IN THE }
 PRESENCE OF }